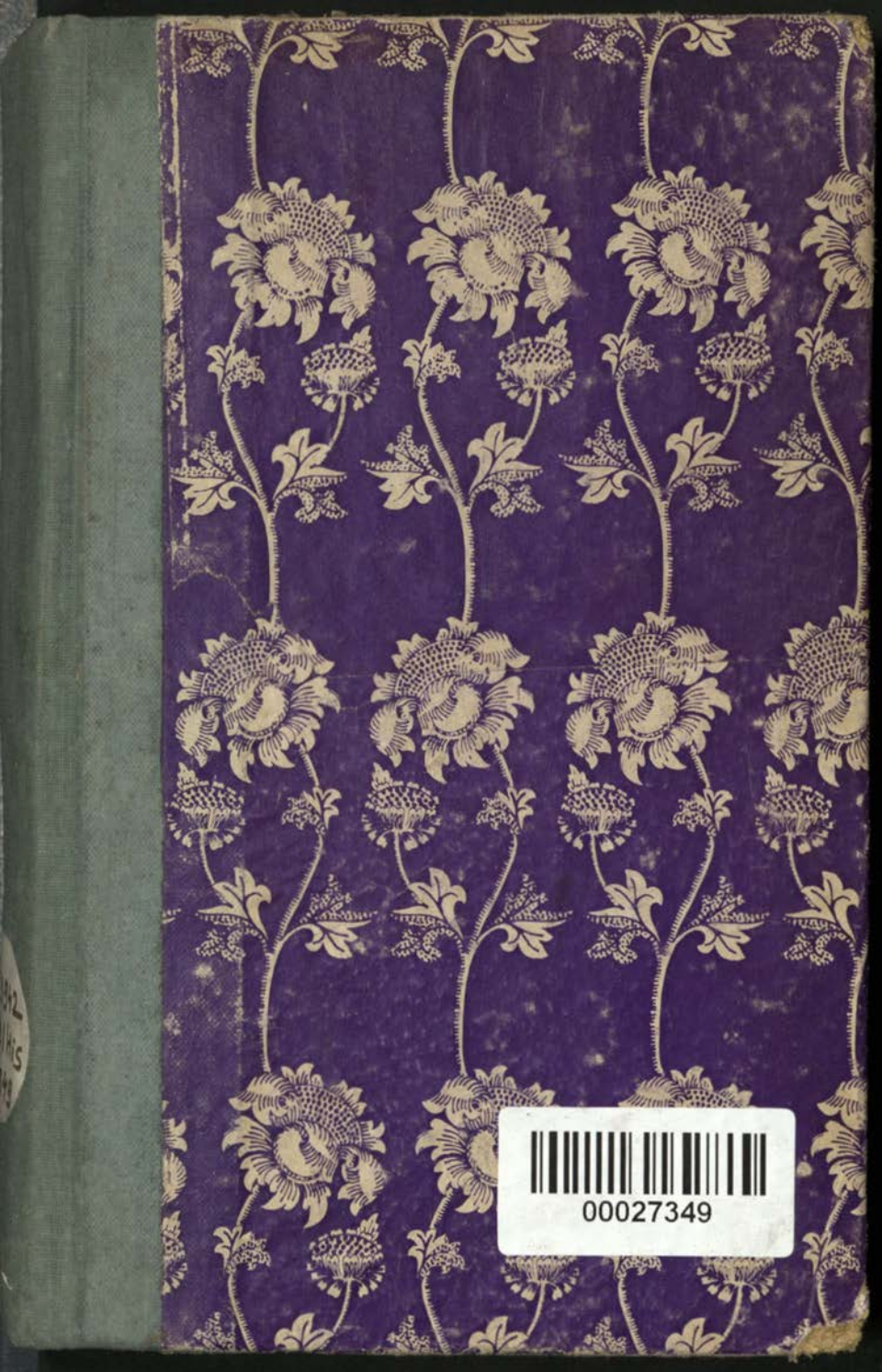

00027349

00027349

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 April, 2016

have been subjected to cotemporary cross-examination. Now, a cotemporary historian is a witness as well as an historian—a witness, indeed, giving his testimony under the most efficient securities for its accuracy; liability to instant denial and searching cross-examination. If his political views and the acts of his public life are well known, his evidence will be the more strictly scrutinized, and received with that caution and allowance which a known partiality requires. His opinions will be judged after the same fashion, and be the less likely to mislead, because they come from one whose preconceived political views have been long openly avowed and thoroughly well known.

It must, however, be admitted, that if a cotemporary possess some special knowledge and peculiar means of information, he is nevertheless shut out from an acquaintance of many facts, or precluded from the open use of evidence, which may be freely communicated when all the actors in the scenes described shall have passed away. Every cotemporary history, therefore, must even as evidence be in some degree incomplete. The publication, nevertheless, of a narrative thus necessarily imperfect must, if it excite discussion, criticism, and reply, contribute to bring out the truth, and put it upon record. Many an assertion that has slept for a century in an unpublished memoir, and passed current when at length made public, would have met with

27349

instant contradiction and refutation had it been openly hazarded during the lifetime of the writer.

The testimony of living witnesses, tried and sifted by persons immediately interested in the matter to which their testimony relates, is far more valuable than ex parte assertions, no matter how authoritative or circumstantial.

No one, however, who has not attempted such a task as that which I have essayed, can well appreciate the difficulties which belong to it. These difficulties, however, would not be lessened by time. That which is now difficult, would, in a few years, become impossible.

In every great political crisis, much that is of importance—much that we should desire to know, is not recorded in writing; or if recorded, the record is often unwittingly—not seldom *intentionally*—destroyed. In such cases, we must trust to oral testimony, which every year becomes more scanty and faulty, and which, if not seized at once, will quickly be lost for ever. For an accurate estimation of the character of public men, these unrecorded events are often of the highest importance; and as to enable us to form a just appreciation of the conduct of those who have taken part in the government of mankind, is one of the great purposes for which history is written, it is almost impossible to overrate the

value of any process, by which such fleeting evidence is rendered permanent, trustworthy, and available. To make it trustworthy is, indeed, the most difficult portion of the task. Passion not only distorts the judgment, but also misleads the memory; and I have often found half a dozen narrators of the same events, all honestly intending to tell an accurate story, but all, nevertheless, giving very different—and often very contradictory—descriptions of the same transactions. In this conflict of testimony, the only chance of attaining truth is by means of comparison and mutual explanation. While the witnesses are alive this may be accomplished; death, however, renders all such friendly cross-examination utterly impossible; and, where the actors are few, and the events important, the need of an immediate cotemporary record *increases; the* difficulty, however, of making it, increases with the necessity.

For the opinions expressed throughout this work I alone am responsible—whether correct or not, they are my own. They have been formed upon multifarious, and often contradictory, testimony. Of that testimony I have attempted to judge without favour or affection; and the conclusions at which I have arrived are, I am unfortunately obliged to add, often in direct opposition to those formed by the friends who have been most liberal in enabling me to compose

the following work. Among those friends it is well known that Lord Brougham has been the most confiding; and I am anxious to relieve him from the responsibility of agreeing with me in my estimation of the public men with whom he was associated, more especially of King William IV., of whom I have spoken in a way wholly opposed to every opinion that I have ever heard my noble friend express, when discussing the character and conduct of his royal master. Lord Brougham is accustomed to describe William IV. as frank, just, and straightforward. I believe him to have been very weak and very false; a finished dissembler, and always bitterly hostile to the Whig Ministry and their great measure of reform. He pretended to have unbounded confidence in them, and great respect for their opinion, even while he was plotting their overthrow, and adopting every means in his power to hamper them in their conduct, and to depreciate them in the estimation of the world. All the documents I have seen which relate more immediately to the king—and they have been, for the most part, letters written by his command, and at his dictation—have led me to this conclusion. As a looker on, scanning carefully every word, and comparing letters written at different periods, and under very different states of mind, I could not resist the evidence which forced this opinion

upon me, though I can well understand why Lord Brougham finds it impossible to share it with me. The kindness and generosity of his own nature make him give easy credence to kind professions in others. The off-hand, hearty manner of the king, therefore, imposed upon his chancellor. The very weakness of the king, too, gave him strength. His capacity was notoriously contemptible; and Lord Brougham could not, for a moment, believe himself the dupe of parts so inferior; and yet, in truth, was he deceived. The trained artifice of a mean spirit misled and cajoled the confiding generosity of a great and powerful mind; and, to this hour, Lord Brougham asserts that the king was a sincere reformer, and earnest, throughout the struggle which followed the introduction of the Reform Bill, in his expressed desire to have that measure passed in all its integrity. My opinion as to this matter is fully stated in the history which I have given of all the transactions connected with it; and I am now only anxious to declare that, in that opinion, Lord Brougham does not coincide, and for it cannot be held responsible.

This assertion will, I fancy, appear unnecessary to those who may read the following history. I have endeavoured throughout to judge and to speak of the acts I describe, and the men performing them, without allowing personal predilections or dislikes to interfere

either with my judgment, or the expression of it. I have never stopped to inquire who would be pleased, who displeased, with what I was about to say—and consequently, I very much fear, that having stated, in each case, what I really thought, I shall not seldom displease those even for whom I have a sincere regard —and appear in individual instances to utter harsh opinions respecting the conduct of those towards whom I entertain feelings of great reverence and affection. This painful consequence was inevitable, when writing of my own times, and telling what I believe to be the truth—and constitutes, in fact, the chief objection to such an undertaking. The spirit and scope of my criticism may, I fear, be often misunderstood, and displeasure felt where certainly no offence was intended.

A party politician (and in a government like *ours*, a politician who wishes to be a minister, or member of a government, must belong to a party) should not be judged by one only of his acts—nor even by the whole of them separately considered. When we speak and judge of the character of the man, we are bound to take into account the necessary exigency of his party position; but when estimating the tendency of his acts, and those of his party, we must also consider the higher interests of political morality generally, and endeavour to show in what way, and to what extent, received party rules, and the conduct resulting from

them, deviate from that more exalted standard, to the use of which it is to be hoped we are constantly tending. Having continued reference to this superior rule, and by it trying each act as it passes in review before us, we may appear to use language not in accordance with our estimation of the characters of those by whom those acts have been performed. There is, however, no real inconsistency in this apparent discrepancy, according to my view of the matter; and as I believe that view can be described in a few sentences, I will here endeavour to give an exposition of it.

Every administration, and indeed every political party, must of necessity be the result of a series of compromises on the part of those who compose it. No two men can be found who think alike on all points—and the actual course of any government cannot in every case seem perfectly right to any one of the members of it: no course that could possibly be devised could, in every instance, be in accordance with the ideas of more than one man at most—and in that case, that one man would really be the government: but with us a government must be composed of many—and in order to enable it to take some line, each member gives way in some matter, and agrees to support that plan of conduct which is the result of these mutual concessions. The nice point, in such a proceeding, is to determine when concession has gone far

enough. In an unscrupulous age, and by unscrupulous politicians, mere personal ends are sought by party means; and so long as the personal interest is advanced, no compromise is thought improper. There is, in fact, no principle; no opinions are deemed of any worth, and a shameless profligacy then marks the public conduct of all public men. As political morality improves, however, men become more scrupulous, and every sudden change of opinion, every waiving of a known scruple, is scanned with greater severity, and mere personal advantage ceases to be deemed a sufficient excuse for this species of compromise. Politicians then endeavour to make it appear, that considerations of public interest have determined their conduct, and that if they have in any case given up opinions long avowed, and strenuously sustained, no narrow private advantage has led to such change, but that *the public* weal has alone been consulted by them. In the time of our fathers, and in our own, instances of rapid conversions and extraordinary alliances have occurred, necessarily giving rise to controversy and criticism; and assuredly the historian who should pass these by without comment, could hardly be considered to have fulfilled his duty. But it may be, that in some cases he may deem the conversion sincere, and yet not wise —and the conduct which followed it opposed to the dictates of a severe and accurate morality; while in others he may believe that the change of opinion was a

profligate pretence put forth, to cover a corrupt private end. In both these cases, the act itself would be blamed, but the men by whom they were severally performed would be very differently estimated. The sudden and extraordinary coalition of Mr. Fox and Lord North has been generally deemed to have been the result solely of considerations of personal advantage, to the furtherance of which end a pretended regard for the public weal was profligately employed as a means. To cover a corrupt purpose, a false pretence was stated. The end and the means were alike disgraceful. So, in our times, a change as regards political opinions equally striking, though certainly not so universally condemned, took place in the year 1830, on the question of parliamentary reform. Mr. Canning and Mr. Canning's friends were, during Mr. Canning's whole career, distinguished by their determined opposition to every attempt to alter the constitution of the House of Commons. Mr. Canning likewise was, during the last years of his life, attacked with great vehemence, and with extraordinary power and effect, by Lord Grey. So effective, indeed, was Lord Grey's assault, that historians have not scrupled to assert that Mr. Canning's health was seriously, if not fatally, affected by it.* This was in 1827.

* This attack of Lord Grey was said, at the time, to have been so acutely felt by Mr. Canning, as to induce him to think of taking a peerage, in order to be able in person to reply to his accuser.

Three years after, some of Mr. Canning's friends—they who had been, during his life, his most ardent supporters, and who shared with him his strongly-rooted dislike of any attempt to change the representation of the country,—suddenly in 1830 not only gave up these their long-cherished opinions, but joined with his great opponent, Lord Grey, in forming an administration pledged to propose a large and searching scheme of parliamentary reform; and men naturally inquired what circumstances, whether views of private advantage or considerations of the public welfare, led to so extraordinary a proceeding: and whatever might be the ultimate conclusion formed upon this inquiry, this was clear—personal advantage did result to the persons who thus suddenly changed their opinions and their party, and their acceptance of office was not a matter of absolute necessity.

The conduct of Sir Robert Peel, *again, with* respect to Catholic Emancipation and the Corn-laws, affords two further instances of a remarkable change in political opinions; and here the judgment of posterity will probably not be doubtful. The change in each case will, I think, be deemed a conscientious one, though it will of necessity tend to diminish the reputation of Sir Robert Peel as a prescient statesman. When the danger did really come, he manfully faced it, and submitted to great sacrifices in order to

rescue his country from the mischief which threatened. That mischief, however, he did not foresee, but scoffed at those who had been for years predicting its coming; and thus though, when convinced of his error, he acknowledged and endeavoured to repair it, evil in the case of the Catholic question had resulted from it, that no effort of his could prevent or cure. His conduct with respect to the Corn-law was not less beneficial to his country, though more damaging to his own character for candour and truth. We can hardly believe that when he rallied the Tory party under the banner of protection, he believed in the wisdom and justice of the legislation he was recommending —that is if he understood and felt the arguments he employed, when, in 1846, he repealed the law by which protection was afforded to the agriculturist. And here we may fairly inquire, supposing him not wholly to have acquiesced in the doctrine of protection when by its aid he gathered together the scattered fragments of the Conservative party, in how far he was justified in employing the language and urging the arguments that were grateful to that party? Was this a compromise of opinion beyond the limit set by a fair consideration of party interests? Suppose the famine of 1846-47 never to have occurred, and only the natural and necessary evils of protection to the general interests of the country, such as Sir Robert

Peel afterwards depicted, to have alone resulted from it—and which he must have understood while using protection as a rallying cry—was he in any honest view of party necessities justified in so using it? These various cases will, I think, illustrate what I mean. In all of them we must judge of the morality of the men by the party code of their time. The acts we must test, in order that they may serve as an example to posterity, by those more stringent rules which purer and more enlightened views enable us to frame, and which an improving public opinion will by degrees enforce.

Keeping then these matters distinct, I can often blame the acts and yet admire and respect the men by whom they were performed. I may think the rules faulty and mischievous which they deemed honourable and wise, and yet believe them to have been true men and honest. I may blame and dislike their code of morality, but yet esteem them while adhering to it. On the other hand, a departure from the dictates of a defective code may indicate a want of moral principle, a criminal disregard of every sanction, and in this case our estimate of the man would be lowered, in consequence of conduct in itself praiseworthy or harmless. If, indeed, such opposition to established rules has been brought about by superior knowledge, and the right has been pur-

sued with a magnanimous disregard of all merely personal considerations, then, indeed, we admire at once the morality of the man, and the intellect which guided it.

The reader will perceive that my work was written in the year 1849, and that consequently I speak of Sir Robert Peel as of a living person. I was unwilling, upon his calamitous death, to alter the form of expression to the past from the present tense; as this change alone could not have affected all the alterations that would in consequence have been required. I have therefore left what I had written in the form it originally took. Johnson said, "no man speaks of another, even suppose it be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear him exactly as he would if he thought he was within hearing." I believe there is much of truth in this statement, and I have therefore not attempted to vary the expressions which I had hoped the living man would have seen. In the main there is indeed nothing that I desire to alter. The opinion of Sir Robert Peel's merits as a statesman which I entertained in 1849 I hold now in 1852. But in 1849 I hoped that he might live to render services to his country greater than any which he had hitherto accomplished (and yet they were many and important), and greater than any which are likely, in my opinion, to be rendered by any living statesman. The tone of

my observations was much influenced by this expectation, and I am not unwilling to leave upon record the extent of my hope, even though, by a dire calamity, it is now for ever extinguished. Sir Robert Peel, in his political career, committed great mistakes; he was, nevertheless, from the very character of his mind, peculiarly fitted to be a potent leader of the English people. He was not a rapid learner, but he was continually improving. He was ever ready to listen to the exposition of new ideas, and though slow to adopt them, slow to understand and appreciate their truth and importance, if true they were, he was always prepared to entertain and discuss them. His strongest sympathies too were with the nation, and not with a small dominant section or party, and in this he was pre-eminently distinguished from the Whig statesmen whom he through life opposed. They may rule *for* the nation, but they certainly rule *by* a clique. If they are liberal sometimes in opinion, it is because to be so suits their party purposes. If they adopt a new idea it is for the same immediate end. They refuse to be associated with any but their own peculiar set, and deem no one capable of conducting wisely the affairs of the nation, unless he be allied to their own party, and thus born to dominion. Sir Robert Peel had

none of this exclusive feeling. He was great enough to perceive and appreciate worth in others, had the wisdom to receive instruction even from opponents, and candour to acknowledge the obligation. Thus he went on to the end, improving with the nation to which he belonged, never outrunning, and seldom, certainly not of late years, lagging much behind the national mind. Had his intellect been of a bolder and more original cast, he would probably have been a less successful minister, as in that case he might often have proposed reforms before the nation was prepared to receive them, and thus have diminished his power as a minister, while earning the renown of a philosopher. His chief danger, however, was from an opposite quarter. On two momentous occasions he lingered too long in the ancient ways, and was too tardy in following public opinion. He ran no risk of being ever before it. But the pioneer who prepares the way is not he who reaps either the immediate benefit or honour resulting from his labour. The philosopher who discovers great truths, and collects the evidence by which they are eventually established, must be content to have his reward in the reverence and gratitude of posterity, and must be satisfied with the consciousness of the real value and importance of his discoveries. But the statesman, to be useful, must be powerful;

and in a government like ours, and among a practical people like the English, the safest course for a reforming minister, is never to be before his age. Let him not be obstinately wedded to any views or opinions—let him be ever ready to hear, and carefully and respectfully listen, to all sides of every question—but let him religiously abstain from appropriating, or assenting to any novel conception, until the public thoroughly understands, and earnestly adopts it. Sir Robert Peel, twice in his life, erred in being too much of a laggard, and upon the Catholic question so committed himself, in opposition to emancipation, that no road of decorous retreat was open to him. He indeed broke through the trammels which his party connexions had created, and which his own ingenuity had materially strengthened. The lesson was severe, and, to a mind so sensitive as his, must have been exquisitely painful. The effect, however, was, in the end, greatly conducive to the superiority to which, in a few years afterwards, he attained. He was made a new man by the trial and suffering to which he was thus subjected, and although upon the question of Parliamentary Reform he again committed the same mistake—that false step was not without its advantages, as he was thereby enabled to rally around him the fragments of the old Tory party, and by their aid to win his way again to office and to power. His conduct during his last ad-

ministration, though it gave offence, never to be forgiven, to some of his immediate partisans, made him the most popular minister and the most powerful statesman known in England since the days of the first William Pitt. The nation had confidence in his prudence; they believed him sincerely anxious to promote the welfare of his country, and to have real sympathies with the industrious millions of our people. There was a feeling, every day growing stronger, that he was destined to be the people's minister; that he would be able, by means of popular support, to which at length he could alone look for aid, to depart from the rule by which the whole government of the country had hitherto been placed exclusively in the hands of the aristocracy, and to unite upon the Treasury bench a really national administration—one in which the practical sagacity and the multitudinous interests of the mercantile, manufacturing, and labouring classes should have representatives, who would not appear in the degraded character of ministerial lackeys, but as independent and equal colleagues; not receiving office as a favour, and holding it upon sufferance, but taking it as a right, and retaining it, not in accordance with the will of an exclusive clique, but in obedience to the wishes and command of the nation. Entertaining the hope that such was to be the ultimate mission of Sir Robert Peel, the nation looked with eager expectation

to his future career. He rose in their affections in proportion as he lost the favour of his party, and he never was so powerful as when by that party he was at last scouted, and deemed to be for ever dismissed. But, unfortunately, this hope was not to be fulfilled, and the intensity of the national sorrow upon the death of Sir Robert Peel, gave a practical proof of the extent of those expectations which had thus been unhappily frustrated. Every succeeding year increases our regret; a bitter and humiliating experience of the inefficiency of those by whom he has been succeeded, making us more acutely feel the loss we sustained, when, by an untoward fate, he was prematurely snatched away.

The delay which has occurred in the publication of these volumes will give to some passages in them a character which in truth they do not deserve. There are some observations respecting Mr. Shiel, which would have been worded differently, had I presumed that they could have appeared only after his death. To the substance of the animadversion, I still adhere; but now that the voice of the brilliant rhetorician is mute, and he can no longer wield in his own defence that weapon of elaborate and biting sarcasm, in the use of which he was so great a master, I am sorry that any phrase of mine should contain even the subdued taunt which, undoubtedly, I intended to convey. The

matter is, in itself, a trifle; but I have too often listened with admiration to his peculiar, and yet not seldom splendid declamation—I have too often felt and voted with him on behalf of the country he honoured while defending her, not to express my regret that now, even by an insignificant sentence, I may seem to depreciate his worth.'

CONTENTS.

Book the First.

Chapter I.

General View of Affairs, from the end of the War, in 1815, *to the close of Lord Liverpool's Administration, in* 1827.

PAGE

Effects of the war experienced in 1815 3
Depression of trade and manufactures 4
Agricultural prosperity 4
Disturbed by the peace 5
Miseries which followed 5
Law passed to keep up the price of agricultural produce . 6
Offensive to the manufacturing and mercantile classes . . 6
Beneficial consequences of the peace at length apparent . . 8
Death of George III. 8
The Regent's conduct to his wife upon coming to the throne 9
Policy pursued by the Whigs on this occasion 9
Death of the Queen 10
Opinion entertained by the people of her treatment . . . 10
Prosperity and increasing intelligence of the industrious classes 11
Efforts to improve the law relating to jurisprudence, &c. . 11
Views entertained by Adam Smith 12
Mr. Pitt's opinion of them 12
Mercantile legislation commenced by Mr. Ricardo and Mr. Huskisson 13

PAGE
Ireland a stumbling-block to the Tory party 13
The Act of Union 15
Mr. Pitt's intentions frustrated 15
Separation in the cabinet produced by Ireland and her discontents 18
Claims of the Catholics discussed during successive administrations 17
Catholic emancipation proposed by Sir F. Burdett . . . 19
Negatived by the new House of Commons 20

Chapter II.

From the Retirement of Lord Liverpool, in March, 1827, to the passing of the Act for the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, in May, 1828.

PAGE
Lord Liverpool attacked by paralysis 21
Mr. Canning: desired by the King to form an administration 21
Refusal of his party to serve under him as chief 21
The Catholic claims treated as an open question 22
The Duke of Wellington's opinion upon the altered condition of the administration, and his reasons for secession 22
Retirement of Mr. Peel 23
Mr. Canning's alliance with the Whigs 23
Mr. Tierney and Lord Lansdowne join the administration . 24
Refusal of Lord Grey 24
Mr. Brougham's explanation of his views 24
Speech of Lord Grey, declining to support Mr. Canning's government 26
Tory opposition to drive the premier from office 28
The Whigs in opposition contrasted with their conduct when in power 29

PAGE
Mr. Peel's speech upon Mr. Canning's new allies . . . 30
Mr. Brougham in reply 33
Mr. Canning's statement of his views 34
Personal recrimination in the session of 1827 36
Death of Mr. Canning 36
Lord Goderich desired to form a ministry 37
His failure to accomplish the King's wishes 37
The Duke of Wellington succeeds him 37
Mr. Brougham's opinion of the Duke's want of qualifications as prime minister 40
The principal members of the Duke's cabinet 43
Hopes and fears respecting Catholic emancipation . . . 44
Opposition tactics under Mr. Tierney's nominal leadership . 48
Powerful assistance from Mr. Brougham 49
Dissensions in the cabinet 51
Lord Sandon's appeal to Mr. Huskisson 53
Mr. Huskisson's resignation 55
Accepted by the Duke 55
Resignation of other members of the cabinet 56
The Duke's ministry in a minority 58
The Test Acts 59
Their repeal 70

Chapter III.

From the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts to the end of the Session of 1829.

PAGE
Signs of weakness in the ministry 72
Catholic emancipation 73
Appointment of the Marquis Wellesley as lord-lieutenant of Ireland 73
Tithe Composition Act 75
The Marquis Wellesley's opinion in favour of emancipation 75

PAGE
Lord Anglesey appointed lord-lieutenant 76
His recal by the premier 76
The Duke of Northumberland appointed his successor . . 76
The Irish Tithe Commutation Act unsatisfactory . . . 77
The Catholic Association 77
Denounced by the Duke of Wellington 77
Extraordinary power exercised by Mr. O'Connell over his countrymen 78
His character and influence described 78
Mutual cordiality and confidence between Mr. O'Connell and the Catholic priesthood 79
Mr. O'Connell's commanding talents 82
Grievances of the Irish people 83
Mr. O'Connell's agitation for Catholic emancipation . . . 84
Sir F. Burdett's motion on the subject 86
Majority in favour of concession 87
The resolution affirming it sent to the House of Lords . . 87
Speeches on the occasion, described 87
Extracts from those of the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel 88
Return of Mr. O'Connell for Clare 89
Speech from the throne in favour of concession, referred to 94
Bill for the relief of the Catholics 94
Mr. Peel's resignation of his seat for Oxford University . 95
Sir R. Inglis chosen as his successor 96
Duel between the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea 96
Ministers rely upon their opponents for support 97
Mr. O'Connell's right to his seat denied 98
Mr. Peel's election for Westbury 99
He submits his plan of relief 99
Details of the plan 100
Aristocratic and ecclesiastical dominion 102
The latter sacrificed 102
Proposal to abolish the qualification of the forty-shilling freeholders 103
Mr. Peel's concessions 106

PAGE
Violent opposition by the High Tory party 110
The 'No-Popery' cry 111
Religious excitement among the people 112
Sermons preached against concession 114
The Relief Bill, and the Franchise Regulation Bill read a third time 116
The former moved by the Duke of Wellington in the Upper House 116
Debate upon the question, described 117
Agitation in Ireland 118
New writ for Clare issued, on Mr. O'Connell's refusing to take the oath of supremacy 118
His statement of his case at the bar of the House . . . 122
Consequences of emancipation 124
Cases of Penryn and East Retford 128

CHAPTER IV.

Commencement of the Session 1830, *extending to June.*

PAGE
State of parties 131
The King's dislike to Mr. Brougham 132
Opening of parliament by commission 133
Lord Stanhope's amendment upon the address, in the Lords 134
Negatived by a large majority 135
Sir Edward Knatchbull's amendment, in the Commons . 136
Negatived 138
Proceedings of the opposition 139
Sir F. Burdett's opinion of the Duke of Wellington . . . 140
State of the nation, as described by Lord Stanhope . . . 142
Assented to by the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Eldon 143
Financial measures 145
Consistent conduct of the administration 146

PAGE
Distress of the country acknowledged by all parties . . . 147
Difficulty of alleviating it 148
Mr. Hume's remedy 148
Character of Sir James Graham 149
His description of the distress of the industrial classes, and motion to reduce official salaries 151, 154
Mr. Hume's motion for repeal and modification of taxation 155
Seconded by Lord Howick and approved by the Whigs. . 155
Negatived by a large majority 157
Scheme of retrenchment proposed by the administration, generally approved 157
Hopes of alliance by the Whigs 162
The army estimates discussed 163
Great reductions proposed by the government 164
General satisfaction expressed 164
Navy estimates discussed 165
Mr. Poulett Thompson's motion for a revision of the taxes negatived 166
Proposed grant to Mr. Dundas and Mr. Bathurst refused . 167
Declining health of the King, and corresponding exertions of the opposition 167
Sir James Graham's proposals of economical reform . . . 168
Defeated by large majorities 170, 172
Mr. R. Gordon's suggestion of a select committee to inquire into the estimate for the repairs of Windsor Castle 173, 175
Withdrawal of the motion for that estimate by the Chancellor of the Exchequer 175
Labours of the opposition to curtail expenditure 176
Defeated 180

Chapter V.

Continuation of Session of 1830.—*Reform in Parliament.*—*Death of George IV.*

PAGE
National movement for parliamentary reform 183
First motion for parliamentary reform made by Mr. Pitt . 184
Mr. Burke's violent opposition 185
Resolutions proposed, in the next session, on the same subject, by Mr. Pitt, negatived 187
The Duke of Richmond's letter to Colonel Sharman . . . 187
Attempts by Mr. Fox to drive Lord North from power . 188
Coalition ministry dismissed, and Mr. Pitt made premier . 189
Mr. Pitt's plan of reform discussed, and negatived . . . 191
His subsequent abandonment of his endeavours to reform the House of Commons 191
Great change in his opinions 192
Mr. Grey's notice of motion for reform in the representation 193
Mr. Pitt's persecution of Horne Tooke and Hardy . . . 195
Erskine's exordium to his defence of Horne Tooke . . . 195
Mr. Grey's motion discussed 196
Refusal of the House to listen to the proposal 197
The question pressed in the succeeding year by Mr. Grey . 197
Conduct of Mr. Fox on this occasion, described by Burke . 198
Mr. Grey's motion negatived by a large majority 200
Anxiety of the Whigs from that period, until recently, to separate from the Radical reformers 201
Sir Francis Burdett's repeated motions for parliamentary reform referred to 203
Lord John Russell's motion in 1819 204
Withdrawn 205
Increasing division between Reformers and Whigs . . . 206
Number of petitions in favour of parliamentary reform, from 1823 to 1830 inclusively 208
The Marquis of Blandford's scheme of reform in 1830 . . 212

PAGE
Motion made by Mr. Calvert for prevention of bribery at East Retford takes precedence 212
Amendment moved by Mr. Tennyson 212
Supported by Lord Howick 215
Mr. Tennyson's amendment lost 217
Mr. Calvert's bill carried 218
The Marquis of Blandford's motion negatived 220
Lord John Russell's motion for the enfranchisement of Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham 220
Rejected, after lengthened debate 228
Mr. O'Connell's motion for radical reform 228
Amendment moved by Lord John Russell 229
The motion and amendment debated 234
The former lost by an overwhelming majority—the latter also negatived 240
Proceedings in the House of Lords on the bill for disfranchising East Retford 240
Attempt to remove the disabilities of the Jews 242

CHAPTER VI.

From the Death of George IV., June, 1830, to the end of the Session of Parliament, 23rd July.

PAGE
Death of George IV. 244
His character 245
Accession of William IV. 250
His message to the two Houses of Parliament. 252
The Duke of Wellington's speech on the discussion that followed in the Lords, described 252
The address in answer to the message. 253
Sir Robert Peel's eulogy of George IV. 254
Mr. Brougham's favourable opinion of his successor . . . 256
The Duke of Wellington's proposal to dissolve parliament . 257
Opposed by Lord Grey and his party 257

PAGE
Lord Grey's motion for adjournment negatived in the House of Lords 260
Sir Robert Peel's motion for an address in the Commons . 260
Lord Althorp's amendment for adjournment negatived . . 270
Mr. Brougham's attack upon the ministry 271
Arrested by Sir Robert Peel 273
Second amendment negatived 274
Popularity of William IV. 274
Mr. Robert Grant's notice of motion for the appointment of a Regency 275
Mr. Huskisson's prophetic warning 277
His sudden and accidental death 277
Reply of the Attorney-General and Sir Robert Peel alluded to 278
Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Brougham on the institution of monarchy 279, 280
Mr. Grant's motion negatived by a large majority . . . 282
Mr. Brougham's notice of motion on colonial slavery . . 282
Sir George Murray's entreaty for its withdrawal 284
Refusal of Mr. Brougham to relinquish it 285
Negatived 286
Prorogation of parliament by the King in person 286

Chapter VII.

From the Dissolution of the Parliament in July, to the Meeting of the New Parliament in October, 1830.

PAGE
Remarks upon the state of parties 287
The Duke of Wellington's ministry becomes unpopular . . 291
Effect of foreign affairs on opinions at home 292
Usurpation of Dom Miguel 294
Leopold of Saxe Coburg 295
State of France 295

PAGE
The Royalist party in France 296
Arbitrary projects of Charles X. resisted by the Chamber of Deputies 299
Change of administration in France 299
Despotic plans of Charles X.'s new ministry 301
Associations in France to resist the levying of taxes . . . 302
Struggle between the French ministry and the people . . 303
Majority in the Chambers against the administration and preparations for a new election 303
Immense majority against ministers in the new Chambers . 304
Proceedings of the French ministry 305
Abrogation of the Charter by Charles X. 306
He is dethroned. 307
Revolution accomplished. 308
Its effects in Europe 309
State of Belgium 310
Prevalence of discontent in the Belgian provinces . . . 313
M. de Potter's address to his countrymen during imprisonment 314
Accusation of M. de Potter. 315
Trial and condemnation of MM. de Potter, Bartels, and Tielmans 316
Excitement of the people. 316
Banishment of M. de Potter 317
Revolution in Brussels 319
Separation of Belgium from Holland 320
Insurrection in Poland 321
Proceedings in Portugal 322
State of opinion in England. 323
Suspicion created by the conduct of the English Attorney-General, Sir Charles Wetherell 325
Replaced by Sir James Scarlett 326
Prosecution of the *Morning Journal*. 327
Consequences of the prosecution 331
Effect of the French Revolution on public opinion in England 333
State of feeling among the poor 334

PAGE
Disturbance in the rural districts 335
Conduct of the country magistrates 337
State of opinion in the towns 338
Popular demands 340
Policy of the Whigs during the excitement. 341
Change in public opinion during the fifteen years of peace . 344
Reform in Parliament, a popular topic 347
The Middlesex and Yorkshire elections 348, 349
Result of the elections, as given by the *Annual Register* . 352
Jeopardized condition of the Duke of Wellington's administration 353

Chapter VIII.

From the Meeting of the New Parliament on October 26th, 1830, to the Downfall of the Wellington Administration, and the formation of the Whig Ministry of Lord Grey.

PAGE
Meeting of Parliament 355
The King's Speech. 357
The debate in the Lords on the address 359
Speech of Lord Grey, as leader of the Opposition 361
The Duke of Wellington's reply 373
The debate in the Commons on the address 378
Its animated character 379
Mr. Brougham's notice of motion on the question of Parliamentary Reform 379
The address moved by Lord Grimstone 380
Speech of Mr. Hume 384
Of Sir Robert Peel 385
Mr. O'Connell's power in Ireland 389
Lord Shrewsbury's gratitude to Mr. O'Connell . . 390, 391
Sir R. Peel's opinion of Mr. O'Connell's motives 392

PAGE
Proceedings of the latter 393
His reply to Sir Robert Peel 394
State of Ireland. 398
Mr. Brougham's speech 400
Effects of the debate on public opinion 406
Debate in the Commons on bringing up the report . . . 408
Lord Winchelsea's attack upon the Duke of Wellington . 410
The King's visit to the City of London promised. . . . 412
And afterwards postponed 414
The debate which followed, described 415
Sir James Graham's speech 418
State of public business 419
Mr. Brougham's plan of reform stated 420
Tactics of ministers 423
The contest on the civil list. 425
Sir H. Parnell's speech 427
Defeat of the ministry 430
Sir Robert Peel's statement. 432
Resignation of the ministry. 433
Mr. Brougham's motion postponed 433
His conduct on that occasion 434
Conflicting statements respecting that conduct 439
Negotiations with Mr. Brougham 441
Mr. Brougham Lord Chancellor 444
Lord Grey's ministerial statement. 445
His exposition of his intended course 446
Lord Grey prime minister 448
His administration 450
Negotiations with the ultra-Tories 454
Adjournment of the session. 456

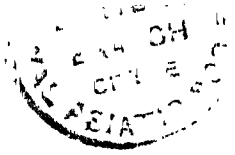
APPENDIX 457

BOOK I.

'In a country like ours, where mutual contention contributes to the security of the constitution, it will be impossible for an historian, who attempts to have any opinion, to satisfy all parties.'—*Preface to* GOLDSMITH'S *History of England.*

'When history comes to sum up the characters and acts of British statesmen—when the crimes of our great men are recorded—when the means by which recent events have been accomplished are stated—there will be no blacker page than that in which the passing of this bill is commemorated.'—*Speech of* Mr. PRAED—*on the motion to agree to the Lords' amendments of the English Reform Bill.*

'The learned gentleman says, that when the historian describes the events of the present time, the account of those transactions will be the blackest page in history. I differ entirely from the honourable and learned member, and am satisfied that the British historian will record it as one of the brightest in our annals.'—*Speech of* Mr. HUME—*in the same debate.*



CHAPTER I.

GENERAL VIEW OF AFFAIRS FROM THE END OF THE WAR IN 1815, TO THE CLOSE OF LORD LIVERPOOL'S ADMINISTRATION IN 1827.

ENGLAND, in the year 1815, at the close of the great struggle with Napoleon, suddenly found herself at peace with the whole world, after having, for nearly a quarter of a century, maintained in every portion of the globe, the most severe and costly war yet recorded in the annals of mankind. This terrible strife was not only expensive and mischievous while it continued, but also the cause of great loss and suffering for many years after peace had returned. The habits which the war had created; the modes of employing capital, which its necessities compelled, could not at once be changed, without immense difficulty and enormous waste. Whole classes, who were engaged in the production of all that was necessary for the equipment and maintenance of our vast naval and military establishments, were suddenly left without the means of subsistence. The manufacturing capital which had been applied to the same ends, became in an instant almost without value—and they who had been yesterday gaining large profits by their trade, were to-day absolutely bankrupt. Employers

and employed suffered alike; and while the transition lasted,—while the slow and expensive process of transferring capital from one employment to another was going on, misery almost unexampled was the lot of the whole mercantile and manufacturing population.

While trade and manufactures were thus hardly pressed, the classes employed in agriculture suffered also, largely, if not in an equal degree. So long as the war continued, the agricultural class, including in that term, land-owners, the capitalist who applied his wealth to land for the purposes of production, and the actual labourer, all enjoyed, though in very unequal shares, the benefits of an extraordinary monopoly. This was the case more especially during the last years of the war, as then England was not only shut out of the continent of Europe, but excluded also from the territories of the United States of America. Our agricultural produce was therefore derived almost entirely from the soil of our own country. The rent of land rose to an extravagant height, and the profits of those who applied capital to land were certain and large. The labourer, in a slight degree, shared in the prosperity of his employer. The numbers of the labourers being in some measure checked by the demand for soldiers and sailors, the competition among them was less than in ordinary times, and wages were thus maintained at a point which enabled the labourer to live in comparative comfort.

One consequence of this extraordinary agricultural

prosperity was, unfortunately, a habit of expensive living, contracted by the landlord and the farmer. Both classes, counting on an indefinite continuance of high prices, made family arrangements, and indulged in a style of living based upon that fallacious hope. The peace, when it came, surprised them in the midst of their unwary enjoyment. A sudden and permanent fall in the price of corn compelled the farmer to demand a reduction of rent—and a reduction of rent brought the landlord whose estate was encumbered by family arrangements, made with a reference to the war prices, into difficulty—and thus all classes were at one and the same time in a state of discontent and suffering.

The miseries attendant on this transition were certainly heightened, whether wisely or not, need not now be asked, by the celebrated act for the resumption of cash payments, passed on the suggestion of Mr. Peel in the year 1819. This measure suddenly improved the condition of creditors throughout the empire—and in a still greater degree made more burthensome that of debtors universally. Debts contracted in a depreciated, were to be paid in a highly valuable currency. Whatever eventual good might result from this hasty proceeding, the immediate suffering was enormous—and ruin, against which no prudence could guard the unfortunate debtor, spread like a wasting pestilence over the land.

The most powerful of these suffering classes were the owners of land. They commanded a majority in

both Houses of Parliament, and were not long before they made attempts to relieve their own distresses.

The mode adopted to attain their end, was to make a law to keep up the price of agricultural produce. This law was passed by overwhelming majorities, both in the House of Commons and House of Lords, in the vain hope of maintaining the monopoly and its consequences, which the late war had produced.[1]

This measure, though popular with the agriculturists, gave great offence to the manufacturing and mercantile classes, as well as to the inhabitants of the larger towns throughout the country. The discontent of the immense masses of human beings congregated in the manufacturing towns of the North became every day more violent and alarming. The attention of the sufferers was naturally excited by the peculiar conduct of parliament, and a strong desire became prevalent among them for a thorough change in the composition of the House of Commons. The dominant class resisted the demand for this reform. The labouring people of the towns insisted; large numbers from day to day assembled, in order to enforce their

[1] This restriction upon the importation of corn preceded by some years the resumption of cash payments. The one was passed in 1815, the other in 1819. On the 17th of February, 1815, Mr. Robinson proposed resolutions in the House of Commons, by which the importation of wheat was prohibited while the price was under 80*s.* per quarter. The bill founded on these resolutions was passed during the turmoil of the Hundred days, which immediately succeeded. The landed interest were quick to protect themselves.

wishes by a display of strength. The government determined to check and utterly to put down these manifestations of discontent. Parliament was ready to adopt the modes of repression proposed; and severe and stringent laws were passed to compel the people to submit in silence to those measures which had been enacted to maintain high prices in the chief article of their food—viz. corn.

The struggle which was maintained by the people out of doors was carried into parliament, and a section of the Whigs, together with the few Radicals who could at that period find seats in the House of Commons, endeavoured vainly to resist the arbitrary desires and arbitrary enactments of the administration. During the war, the same parties had steadfastly maintained that peace was the great necessity of the country, and so long as there was any hope of inducing the people to listen, they urged upon them the wisdom of a peaceful as compared with a warlike policy. The successes of our allies in the north of Europe, and of our own armies in Spain, at length drowned in one loud shout of victory these suggestions of the Whig party in opposition, who were now compelled to be content with faintly protesting against the extravagance which they could not prevent. So soon as returning peace brought new difficulties, and distress, the Whigs as a party opposed, but with no great earnestness, the arbitrary laws by which the government attempted to keep down the discontent of the people; but they did not as a party resist the

tax imposed to keep up the price of corn, and the rents of the land-owners.

The opposition to the government was, however, without effect. The stringent laws enacted were rigorously enforced. The people murmured, but obeyed; the peace of the country, though often threatened, was never seriously disturbed.

At length the beneficial consequences of peace became manifest. The transition of capital was complete, and accumulation began to restore the losses which the sudden change of employment had occasioned. In the political world the same quiet was apparent,—and a long series of peaceful reforms seemed about to be proposed by the ministers themselves. Unfortunately, an element of confusion suddenly appeared, and that quiet which plenty and ease produced, was seriously compromised, by the injustice of George IV. towards his wife queen Caroline.

The death of George III. made in fact no change in the government. The regent had for many years been king, and the mere physical death of his father conferred on him no powers which he did not already possess. But the death of his father, which made him king in name as well as reality, made his wife queen also; and now was seen the strange spectacle of a man who as regent could bear patiently the humiliation of his wife wandering disreputably about the world, suddenly becoming sensitive and alive to his dishonour, upon acquiring the nominal dignity of king. He resisted every proposal to confer on his

unhappy wife the name and honours of queen; and so soon as she demanded them, and prepared to enforce her demands by returning to England, determined rather than yield to her wishes, to aim at her life, and recklessly to risk the peace of his kingdoms by an insane attempt to degrade and punish her. The conduct of the ruling, viz., the Tory party, on this occasion, did in fact most seriously affect their power, by degrading their character in the estimation of their countrymen. As men of honour, they were bound to refuse to be the ministers of the king's unworthy vengeance. They knew, however, that if they had done so, he was determined to call their rivals to power, without asking of them to prosecute the queen. The administration preferred the loss of honour to the loss of office; and, in an evil hour for their fame and for their power, they yielded themselves up to the will of the king, and commenced their scandalous persecution of his wife.[1]

---

[1] The Whig party upon this occasion are *said* to have acted with a magnanimity worthy of the highest encomium. They gave the ministers to understand, that if office were offered to them (the Whigs) by the king, in consequence of the ministers refusing to prosecute the queen, they would refuse it, even though the king should dispense in their case with the unworthy compliance he demanded of his actual cabinet. If this intimation were given, and that it was so, I have the highest authority for stating, the baseness of the ministerial acquiescence is immeasurably enhanced. We shall see, that the Whigs again gave evidence of the same wise and magnanimous disdain of office, to be obtained by unworthy means, in the case of the Emancipation Act.

Political peace was thus utterly annihilated, and all the benefit that could be derived from a gradual improvement of our institutions by the government, was for the time entirely foregone, and a furious party and personal strife occupied the attention of the people, to the great grief and scandal of all wise and virtuous men.

The storm was hushed at length by the death of the unhappy subject of the struggle. The queen, worn out with grief and passion and toil, sank and died. The people considered her a martyr, and her enemies, malignant, cruel, and unscrupulous persecutors. The feeling towards the king was indignant hate—contempt mingled largely with the abhorrence and horror with which the people regarded his ministers. For many years, the estimation in which all public men were held, was greatly influenced by the part the ministers had taken in this miserable proceeding.[1]

Peace, however, still continued; and while politicians were occupied by this unworthy quarrel, the industrious classes were rapidly increasing in wealth,

---

[1] The scrupulous and generous proceeding of the Whigs in refusing to supplant the ministry, was certainly a counterpoise, so far as it was known, to this low estimation of the character of public men. But, unfortunately, the evil conduct was seen by, known to all—the generosity and honour of the Whigs, was a portion of that secret history which floats in the traditions of politicians—is not reported at the time, and is known only to a few, and which, therefore, exerts little influence upon the public estimate of public men.

and improving in their intelligence. Political science, also, became a subject of popular exposition as well as philosophic investigation. The discoveries begun by Adam Smith received confirmation, and were extended. The ancient theory of protection, sapped to its foundation, was at last assailed in its stronghold—the legislature. The persevering industry of Bentham subjected our law also to a searching and systematic inquiry; and day by day forced the dictates of common sense upon the attention of those to whom was entrusted the government of the country. The ministry of the day took the lead as reformers. In times not propitious for reform, Sir Samuel Romilly had endeavoured, at the instigation of Bentham, to mitigate in some small degree the severities of our criminal code. His efforts were highly thought of by the people, but were of little avail in the House of Commons. The truth, however, advanced: the responsible ministers became enlightened before the legislature, and in the two great departments of legal and financial reform preceded both houses of parliament. Mr. Peel began cautiously to collect and arrange the various statutes, in which the law relating to many departments of our jurisprudence was contained. Enactments scattered over the legislation of years were reduced into some order, and brought gradually into a form which bore some resemblance to a system dictated by common sense. The change, indeed, was slow, and was piecemeal, but for this very reason it was better received, because more in accordance with

the ordinary habits of the people, than would have been a more sweeping, systematic, and symmetrical alteration. The *consolidation* of Mr. Peel was viewed with favour as a practical reform, while the *codification* of Bentham was scouted as the mere dream of a visionary theorist.

The economic views which Adam Smith had brought before his countrymen, were by the statesmen of his day hardly noticed. Mr. Pitt, indeed, had early in life become acquainted with them, had acknowledged their truth, and appreciated their worth. But, hurried away by the animosity of his party to the French revolution, and its great champion, Napoleon, he had no time, no thought for anything but war, and the subsidizing Europe into resistance to France. Mr. Fox, on his entrance into public life, was profoundly ignorant of every branch of political economy, and remained so to the end of his days. Younger statesmen, however, did not close their minds against the reception of the important truths which constitute that science. The bank restriction had forced attention to the intricate questions connected with the currency. The Milan and Berlin decrees of Napoleon, and our own impolitic orders in council, compelled our rulers to re-consider, in all its practical results, the whole subject of foreign trade. The change from war to peace, by opening new channels for trade, by creating new difficulties and new wants, had made a revision of our whole commercial and financial system absolutely necessary. The attempt on the part of the

land-owners to protect their own interests, by imposing restrictions on the importation of corn, excited opposition and discussion; discussion, once begun, extended inquiry into the whole doctrine of PROTECTION, and the result became manifest at length by the ministers, under the guidance of Mr. Ricardo, and the direct leadership of Mr. Huskisson, commencing that system of mercantile legislation which has by degrees led to the repeal of the corn laws, and the virtual overthrow of the long-cherished theory and practice of protection.

Had Great Britain alone constituted our empire, it is probable that the Tory party would have remained in undisturbed possession of power, and with the ministry at their head, have proceeded steadily in a gradual, safe, and yet efficient career of useful reforms. But Ireland, unfortunately for England and for herself, is so placed, as to form geographically a necessary portion of the English dominions. Conquered in a rude age, she has been from the very commencement of our rule, the victim of cruelty and oppression. The Reformation unhappily was adopted by a very small portion of the Irish population, and thus to the political and social causes of quarrel and disunion, was added another source of animosity arising from the difference of religion. The original sin of our conquest has, like an evil genius, dogged the steps of our dominion. Every event in our history which has by us been deemed of good augury, and looked upon as a blessing, has in Ireland changed its nature, and

become a curse. The last great revolution—that which placed a protestant family on the English throne, and gave us a government of law, in place of a despotism, was to Ireland the immediate cause of a system of oppression, which ceased only a few years since—of misery, which continues to the present hour. In England, catholicism had become in the popular mind strongly associated with the idea of despotism, so that a love of freedom was but too often united with a hatred and fear of the catholic religion. George III. had most of the vulgar prejudices of his people, and being like all dull men obstinate, to oppose catholic emancipation became with him an effect of temper as well as a matter of conscience. His confused and incapable brain conceived a scruple in consequence of certain words in the coronation oath. With this scruple he puzzled himself, annoyed his ministers, and injured his people. Designing, unscrupulous men like Lord Rosslyn, easily worked upon a mind just trembling upon the brink of insanity. Pretending to maintain a sacred principle, they really sought to advance their own private interests, and scrupled not to foster the crotchety conceits of a madman, even though by so doing they endangered the peace and happiness of a nation. Thus the wise and generous intentions of Mr. Pitt, with respect to the catholics, when he proposed and carried the union with Ireland, were frustrated; that which ought to have been the sure means of making us an united people, was converted into a source of fatal dissen-

sion; and that which should have doubled our strength, divided, weakened, and almost destroyed us. When Mr. Pitt proposed the union with Ireland, he intended not simply to do away with the civil and political disabilities of the catholics, but also to provide a state provision for their clergy. George III. allowed him to carry the Act of Union, but resolved to dismiss rather than permit him to accomplish the remaining portion of his plans. From that fatal hour up to the present, we have felt the consequences of this royal bigotry. So long as George III. retained the semblance of sanity, there was no hope of emancipation for the catholics under his sway. Unfortunately, the king was not the only bigot in the country. And although the House of Commons did in 1812 pass, on the motion of Mr. Canning, a vote favourable to emancipation; and although again, in 1813, it assented to a motion made on behalf of the catholics by Mr. Grattan, it eventually rejected the bill he proposed in consequence of his success. The House of Lords firmly opposed on all occasions every concession; and George IV. himself afterwards professed to feel his conscience pricked when concession was proposed by the Duke of Wellington. A large number of persons out of doors sympathised with the Houses of parliament; and it became clear, that from the justice of England, the catholics of Ireland could have no hope of redress. The anti-popish feeling was strong among us, and with no class of persons was it stronger than the dissenters, who as dissenters

were themselves subject to civil disabilities. Had there been, indeed, no intolerant exclusion of the dissenters, the condition of the catholics would have been yet more desperate. The advocates for civil freedom, however, on the part of the dissenters, were compelled to employ arguments that included the case of the catholics as well as their own; and they who proposed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, could not consistently resist Catholic Emancipation. So freedom benefited by the double oppression.

When the various difficulties which had beset the empire upon the return of peace, were one by one overcome—when industry had gradually found new and prosperous employment—when plenty was returning to the people—when trade, and arts, and science, began to flourish—when the storm arising from the persecution of the queen had passed harmlessly away —when the ministry was taking the lead in proposing and effecting wise and beneficent changes in our systems of law, finance, and commerce—and when prosperity brought us peace in England,—Ireland and her discontents darkened all these fair prospects, checked our advance, arrested the hand of improvement; created distrust, and quarrel, and separation, among the various members of the cabinet; and eventually destroyed the great Tory party who had triumphed over Napoleon.

Concession of the catholic claims became, after the union with Ireland, the great party watchword of the Whigs. The mind of Mr. Pitt was too bold and

generous not to despise the weak injustice of excluding from civil rights so large a portion of the whole united population as the Irish catholics; and Mr. Canning on this subject sympathised with his great leader. Dissension being thus introduced into the Tory ranks, and one point of sympathy arising between the excluded Whigs, and a section of the ministerial phalanx, a new policy was adopted by the administration which succeeded that of Mr. Percival. The concession of the catholic claims became what was technically called 'an open question,' the various members of the administration on this subject being permitted to speak and to vote each according to his individual opinion, and not in accordance with the views of the majority of the cabinet. When, on the death of Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Canning was selected to be the ministerial leader in the House of Commons, the hopes of the catholics rose high, as now the most powerful of their advocates had become, not indeed the nominal head of the administration, but yet second only to the premier, and first in fact in the Commons. The Whig party also looked with complacency upon Mr. Canning's advent to office. They saw and well understood that a rivalry existed within the cabinet, which would eventually compel the weaker section to throw themselves on the Whigs for support. The peculiar position and character of Lord Liverpool enabled him for the moment to unite and keep united these really hostile sections. His mediocrity was his strength, and proved the safeguard of the ministry.

Of him no one was jealous, and they who submitted to him, as their leader, spite of his known inferiority, spurned the idea of obedience to men immeasurably his superiors; and it required little sagacity to perceive that, so soon as Lord Liverpool ceased to be premier, all unity and amity would disappear from the Tory party. Mr. Canning, by his older standing and his brilliant capacity, appeared to be their natural head. But there was one in their ranks as ambitious, though not so brilliant and dazzling as he. The powers of Mr. Peel were, at that time, by the consent of all, rated as inferior to those of Mr. Canning. The wit, the eloquence, the winning manners of Mr. Canning, made rivalry on the part of Mr. Peel hopeless, were they each to trust to their personal capacities alone. The passions of a party supplied the personal deficiency. Mr. Peel was deemed the pupil of Lord Eldon, and was supposed, at that time, by studying at the feet of this Gamaliel, to have become imbued with his passions and his prejudices. Hatred and dread of popery were among the most marked, most potent emotions evinced by that learned lord during his political career. Mr. Peel trod carefully in the footsteps of his friend and leader, and became in the Commons the chief of the no-popery faction. This character suited him in his relative position with respect to Mr. Canning. As the head of a great political band, he was raised to a rivalry and sort of equality with his more gifted rival. Mr. Canning and his friends were deemed the leaders

of the movement which had for its aim the emancipation of the catholics. Mr. Peel, as the head of the majority of the cabinet, took the lead in opposing this demand. So long as Lord Liverpool lived, the two rivals acted together in apparent amity, both being well aware that the time was not far distant when this seeming friendship would be exchanged for direct hostility, and a hollow truce give place to open warfare.

From the death of Lord Londonderry to the paralytic attack which put an end to the political existence of Lord Liverpool, this state of suppressed hostility and simulated amity was carefully maintained. The opposition took advantage of every opportunity to bring the rivalry into play, and to embitter the ill-feeling, that all saw existed,—but in vain; whatever might be the real dissensions and hidden distrust, outwardly the ministry appeared so united, as to be able to work happily together. Mr. Canning retained his opinions and his office. Much liberality in language was shown, but no concession was made. If the catholics gathered strength, and under the leadership of Mr. O'Connell, became troublesome, the administration acted as one man, to conquer and subdue them. But when a proposal was made in the session of 1825, on the motion of Sir F. Burdett, to relieve them from civil disabilities, Mr. Canning and Mr. Peel were found opposed to each other, and the bill which passed the Commons by a majority of 21, was defeated in the Lords. The administration, however,

seemed as firm as ever, spite of the difference of opinion between the two secretaries of state.[1]

They who had hoped to see the cabinet go to pieces in consequence of this dissension among the chiefs, were doomed yet for some years to be disappointed. The House of Commons, which had in 1825 passed a bill for the relief of the catholics, was dissolved in 1826, and the house which met in the November of that year showed in the March following, that the result of the elections had been adverse to the catholic claims, by negativing, after a full debate, a resolution proposed again by Sir Francis Burdett, in favour of removing the civil disabilities under which our Roman-catholic brethren then laboured. This adverse result had no more influence upon the stability of the administration than had been exercised over its destinies by the catholic victory of 1825. Its tenure of office seemed more certain and fixed than ever.[2]

[1] This bill of relief was to be attended by two others, called at the time *the wings*—by the first, the 40*s.* freehold franchise was to be abolished, and one of 10*l.* created—by the second, a provision was to be made for the catholic clergy.

[2] Lord Liverpool had, in fact, been stricken before this division took place, but the completely annihilating effect of his illness was not yet ascertained, and hopes of his recovery were still entertained.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE RETIREMENT OF LORD LIVERPOOL, IN MARCH, 1827, TO THE PASSING OF THE ACT FOR THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS, IN MAY, 1828.

AT this moment of apparent security, on Feb. 17th, 1827, Lord Liverpool was stricken with paralysis, and at once rendered incapable of any further discharge of official duties—he was politically dead; and then was seen how heterogeneous were the materials of which his administration had been composed. The chief man among its various members was undoubtedly Mr. Canning. When the king desired him to form an administration, the nation acquiesced in the wisdom of the selection, and vainly thought that the party to which Mr. Canning belonged, would also deem him the fittest among them, to be their future guide and chief. They, however, judged very differently both of their own merits and his. That he was eminently qualified to be the leader of the House of Commons was at once admitted; but most of them who were willing to act with him as an equal, refused peremptorily, and with some show of contumely, to serve under him as chief. The reason assigned for this refusal appeared at the time not unplausible; but in after years men thought of it with wonder not unmixed with scorn. On the

death of Lord Londonderry, Mr. Canning accepted office, and became the ministerial leader of the House of Commons, upon the express understanding that the concession of the catholic claims should be treated by the administration as an open question;—and he not without some reason believed that it might continue to be so treated when he himself became premier in place of Lord Liverpool. The Duke of Wellington, however, together with Sir Robert Peel, Lord Eldon, Lord Westmoreland, Lord Bexley, and Lord Bathurst, thought differently; and the Duke thus explained the manner in which he viewed the altered condition of the administration.

'I beg leave to suggest to your lordships,' he said on the 2nd of May, 1827, 'an important distinction between Lord Liverpool and the right honourable gentleman. The object of Lord Liverpool's policy was, not to take anything from the Roman-catholics, but to govern the country fairly and impartially according to the existing laws. That of the right honourable gentleman (who it must be remembered is the most able and active of all the partisans of the other side of the question) is to make an important alteration of the laws. The action of the two systems cannot be compared. Lord Liverpool might act impartially; and composed as his cabinet was, he was under the necessity of so acting, even if it could be supposed that his desire was to act otherwise. But the influence of the right honourable gentleman's government must have the effect, even if not so

desired by him, of forwarding his own opinions and views of policy, notwithstanding his professions of an adherence to the policy of Lord Liverpool's government.'[1] Mr. Peel gave the same reason for his secession.[2] He was willing to form part of a cabinet by whom concession to the catholics was considered an open question, provided that the head of the cabinet was opposed to it. As soon as the premier became a friend to emancipation, Mr. Peel felt himself bound to retire.

Acting upon this principle, the majority of Mr. Canning's former colleagues refused to act under him, and the moment at length arrived, so long expected by the opposition. The premier without their aid was unable to maintain his position—and was therefore compelled, if he desired to be prime minister, to coalesce with his former antagonists, the Whigs. The alliance was made[3]—and with the single

---

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. p. 459.

[2] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. p. 395, *et seq.*

[3] This was the first step towards that utter disruption of the Tory party which eventually occurred. The most active and energetic actor upon this occasion—and he has always taken credit for being the means by which the junction with Mr. Canning was effected—was Mr. Brougham. The busy scene of intrigue which then took place can only, however, be fully described by some one who shall have access to the papers of the several persons who took part in it. As a matter of secret history, the laying it bare will be curious and interesting; but the explanation of the influence of the coalition upon the great interests of the country does not require that intimate knowledge of those secret doings of which I speak.

exception of Lord Grey, all the leading Whig statesmen determined to support the new minister. Some of them accepted office under him—all gave him their support. Mr. Tierney, who had acted as the Whig leader in the Commons, became Master of the Mint—Lord Lansdowne also joined the administration, and Mr. Brougham thus explained the nature of the support he was prepared to render the new cabinet.

'While he was ready to do this justice to the retiring party, he should be doing the highest injustice to others, if he did not see the embarrassment and difficulties in which they had left the government. The king suddenly found himself deprived of the services of six out of nine of his ministers. It became absolutely necessary that the offices should be filled up, and that the public service should be committed to the charge of men who were equal to this great crisis.[1] And the result had been to form a government, if any government ever deserved the name, effective, generally consistent, able, honest, and enlightened; and this upon his conscience he believed to be the character of the new administration. It was upon this conviction, and with almost the certainty that the country would soon, from their own experience, come to the same conclusion, that he had given his support to the new

[1] This argument of the king's necessity has since been effectively employed by the Duke of Wellington—once in 1832, again in 1834. On the last occasion the argument was directed against the Lord Chancellor, Brougham.

arrangements.'[1] In the same speech, alluding to the foreign policy of Mr. Canning, and of its coincidence with his own views, Mr. Brougham observed—'The death of Lord Londonderry made way for the right honourable gentleman. He entered office, and proceeded immediately to act upon those principles which he (Mr. Brougham) had moved the House upon in 1817, and which he had defended in 1822. The right honourable gentleman had successfully established a system of liberal and manly foreign policy. Upon these grounds and principles he had given him his best assistance. Guided by these principles, and founding his measures on such grounds in the course of his administration, the right honourable gentleman should have from him that which he had a right, in point of consistency, to demand—a cordial, zealous, and disinterested support.'[2]

While Mr. Brougham, and the Whigs generally, were thus lavish of their praise, and profuse of their promises of support to the new administration, Lord

---

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. p. 377.

[2] Idem. ibid. p. 521. It is stated by those who could best know the circumstances, if such ever existed, that Mr. Canning, at this period, offered Mr. Brougham the office of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, saying, on Mr. Brougham's declining the honour, 'Why, the post of Chief Baron is, you know, the half-way-house to that of the Chancellor.' 'Yes,' was Mr. Brougham's answer; 'but you deprive me of the horses which are to take me on;' meaning that, by being made a judge, he was removed from the House of Commons, and rendered powerless; and that, being no longer formidable, he would be no longer favoured.

Grey called Mr. Canning to a severe account, and sternly scanned the whole tenour of his political life. A more remarkable speech has seldom been uttered in parliament, than that which Lord Grey delivered when explaining his reasons for not joining his friends in their support of Mr. Canning's government. In it after having in the most ample manner conceded to his friends the praise of pure intentions and disinterested motives; after having separated himself from the opposition formed of the Tories who had refused to act with Mr. Canning, he proceeded to examine, one by one, the several claims which the friends of Mr. Canning, old and new, put forth in his name, to the favour and support of liberal politicians—and then stated the grounds on which he based his refusal of that favour and support. One of these statements is important, because, although hypothetical, he challenged contradiction to it, and because the subsequent conduct of Mr. Canning was in accordance with the suggestion which the noble earl then hazarded. He said—

'But one of the grounds on which I refuse my confidence to the present administration is this—I do not see in that administration—I do not see in the persons who compose it, or in the principles on which it is understood to be formed—anything to justify me in supposing that this question (viz., of catholic emancipation,) will advance one step in consequence of the change to which they owe their places. Is it not true, I will ask, that they have entered into an engagement

with his Majesty—let not the House be alarmed at the idea that I am about to enter on forbidden ground, or to touch a topic which the rules of Parliament exclude from its discussion—that they have entered into an engagement with his Majesty as to certain distinct principles on which the administration has been composed? We heard at first that this administration was to be formed on a principle similar to that of which the Earl of Liverpool was the head. My noble friend who spoke last [Lord Spencer] has stated his ignorance of what that principle means. But it is not so with me. I did, and I do understand its meaning; and it is this: the exclusion of the catholic question as a measure of government. To that principle I have always been, and always shall be steadily opposed. And I now ask of the noble lords opposite to answer me, aye or no, is that question or is not that question to be proposed to parliament by them? We are told, it is true, that any individual of the government may if he pleases propose it; but this is a privilege, and not only a privilege, but a right, which was never denied to any member of Lord Liverpool's administration, or of any administration that ever existed. I ask then of noble lords opposite, or of any one of them, to answer me, aye or no, has or has not an engagement been entered into not to bring forward the catholic question as a measure of government?'[1]

The foreign policy of Mr. Canning, which Mr.

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. p. 724.

Brougham had extolled as 'liberal and manly,' met with no favour from Lord Grey. After minutely criticising the several acts of Mr. Canning while foreign secretary, Lord Grey thus concludes his strictures: 'Upon the general foreign policy of the country I feel called upon to state that I place no confidence in the right honourable gentleman's administration. Let those who differ from me upon this point show me a single act calculated to secure my confidence upon this subject.'

The subsequent conduct of Mr. Canning and his Whig allies justified the anticipations of Lord Grey rather than those of Mr. Brougham. The former friends, and now bitter opponents of Mr. Canning, exhibited before the world a most unseemly spite, and by personal abuse, petty vexation, and constant vulgar railing, checked, harassed, and thwarted his administration. They gave him, besides, an excuse for doing nothing, and he died before the world became tired of waiting. As he and his Whig supporters had always advocated the claims of the catholics, the Tory opposition endeavoured by every sort of taunt, threat, and insinuation, to provoke him to propose immediately some measure for the relief of the catholics. They did this, because they felt confident of victory in the struggle that would follow, and hoped by this means to thrust him and his friends from office. Mr. Canning however refused to take advice from his enemies. The Whigs sanctioned his inaction, and the result was in accordance with the

hypothetical assertion of Lord Grey. If Mr. Canning on taking the office of prime minister had made a promise to the king, not to bring forward any measure for the relief of the catholics, his conduct would have been precisely that which he in fact pursued. The advent of a supposed liberal minister to power at once checked all improvement. This was not the first example in our history, of such a result—neither was it the last.

Before the sudden and unexpected illness of Lord Liverpool, the Whigs, then in opposition, deemed it good party policy to occupy the attention of parliament and the nation with the proposal of the various liberal measures which constituted their claim to be considered liberal politicians. They desired to throw discredit upon the administration—to foment the internal dissensions which they knew existed among them—and as the ministry had voluntarily proposed many useful changes, the opposition were obliged to bid high for popularity. The ministry were, for ministers, in fact very liberal reformers—it behoved the opposition to appear still more so; and to that end they filled the order-book of the House of Commons with motions upon all sorts of subjects. Catholic emancipation—relief to the dissenters in the shape of a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—parliamentary reform in many shapes—might all be seen set down for discussion by the many active members of the Whig opposition. The illness of Lord Liverpool checked on a sudden this reforming zeal. The

motions that were useful to an opposition encumbered a ministry, and they who unexpectedly found themselves almost within reach of office, instinctively acquired a dislike of questions which created disagreeable obstacles to the attainment of power. The Whigs who joined Mr. Canning, whether as colleagues or merely as supporters, did not escape from the sarcasms, taunts, and imputations which their previous conduct enabled their opponents to employ against them. The guerillas of the late administration not feeling the restraint which a high position imposed upon the leaders of their party, displayed without disguise the rancour and bitterness which filled their hearts at the elevation of Mr. Canning. The imputation, which Mr. Peel could only insinuate, they made openly and without circumlocution—and the new allies were quickly asked, which of the allied parties was to change opinions, and to forego long-cherished aims. Was catholic emancipation to be no longer sought for? Did Mr. Canning intend to support a repeal of the Test Act, or did the Whigs propose to forget it? Was parliamentary reform to be erased from the notice-book of the House of Commons and the memories of the Whigs, or was Mr. Canning suddenly to become a convert to opinions which, during his whole political life, he had vehemently opposed? 'I am anxious,' said Mr. Peel, and men in after-times recollected his words—

'I am anxious to see the character of party men, and of the great parties of this country, upheld. I

should not be glad, certainly, to see the great Whig party in office. They ought, I think, to be excluded from power; but I should be sorry to see their character as a party lowered and disgraced. But it will be tarnished if the principles are not made known on which the union (viz., between them and Mr. Canning) has been effected; and unless a satisfactory explanation of the reasons why that union has been delayed, be given, I apprehend that the character of this party will not for the future stand very high with the public. I ask again why is this delay? Is it that there are on the notice-book some inconvenient entries, which the members of that party know not how well to evade or erase? What, for example, will they do with the notice of the member for Bandon (Lord John Russell) for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts? This is another important question, which I suspect will display the material difference that exists, between the opinions of those right honourable gentlemen whom I had lately the honour to have for colleagues and their new allies. If after the noble lord has consulted with the leaders of the Protestant dissenters he should be prepared to move for any further concessions in their favour, I give him notice that I intend to oppose him, and that I will always do so, whether in or out of power.'[1] This speech was made—these taunts were employed to wound a great political rival through the sides of his

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. pp. 525-6.

friends. The avenging Nemesis was not far distant—and it would seem that she prompted the words which followed in order to make all future politicians tremble, when they endeavour to injure opponents by accusations of inconsistency.

'That,' continued Mr. Peel, 'indeed is a circumstance of little weight or consideration to me. The most cursory view of my past career will show, that I have been actuated by no ardent desire for office. When I have accepted it, it has always been a personal sacrifice to me. So far as I am personally concerned, I can truly say that I care not whether I return or not. I feel grateful for the confidence of the Crown; but I am, thank God, independent of it. My principles are not changeable with my position. I will adhere to them, through good report and through evil report. It is with these sentiments, that I now say, that the points to which I have referred—parliamentary reform—and the motion entered on the notice-book for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts,—and still more, the catholic question—have not been explained satisfactorily.'

As no man could foresee the part which the speaker of these words was destined in a few short months to perform, the solemn rebuke and the decorous sarcasm, had a *telling* effect upon those to whom it was addressed, and they separately and with haste endeavoured to escape from the imputations which these observations suggested. Mr. Brougham rose immediately, and repelled with scorn, and with many a

bitter sarcasm, the insinuations of the right honourable gentleman. With the skill of a practised disputant, he seized upon the weak point of his opponent's battle, and intrenching himself behind his own high character, he thus boldly answered the question so far as it regarded himself:—

'I will tell the right honourable gentleman further, that putting aside all the great questions which he is so singularly anxious to bring under discussion, including among the rest parliamentary reform, I see sufficient reason to support the present administration. The right honourable gentleman seems never to have known that there was a schism on the subject of reform. It is news to him that there ever were shades of opinion upon it. He was not aware, it appears, that there were as many different views of the general measure, as there have always been of comprehensive political questions. Some are for confining it within narrow limits, others for extending it to the widest. I am ready to vote for any measure of reform. By supporting the present government, I do not abandon or sacrifice one iota of my principles as a friend of parliamentary reform, or any other question on which I may deem it fitting and prudent to deliver my sentiments. As a man of common sense, I must wish to achieve some practical good in my time. If I cannot do all I would, I am bound, without waiting till more extensive views may be adopted, to promote all the good which the opportunity of the passing moment offers me. . . . The

right honourable gentleman has asked, however, upon what principles the government now means to proceed upon certain questions of policy. Among others, he has mentioned the state of the Roman-catholics of Ireland. Does the right honourable gentleman, then, not know that principle? Is there no principle resolved on with which the right honourable gentleman is acquainted? And if, then, there is no principle, why did he quit office? If there was no principle to be adopted upon catholic emancipation, why did he on the ground of that question desert the king? The right honourable gentleman in that case is embarked in the same boat with me. He is equally with me engaged to support the government. Or if not, his question is a two-edged sword which wounds only himself; or at least the sharp edge is applied to him—the blunt can only be turned to me.[1] He has not been justified in abandoning his colleagues in office, and withdrawing his support from the government, if I am not justified, under the circumstances, in affording that government all the support which it is in my power to bestow.'

While Mr. Brougham thus justified the course that he and his friends had pursued, Mr Canning replied emphatically to the questions put to himself.

[1] There must be here some inaccuracy in the report of the learned gentleman's speech, for so practised a speaker as Mr. Brougham could hardly have perpetrated the curious infelicity of this illustration. A two-edged sword means a sword with two *sharp* edges; every common sword has two edges, in the sense attributed to Mr. Brougham's illustration—a sharp and a blunt one. What is intended is, however, manifest.

'I am asked what I mean to do on the subject of parliamentary reform? Why, I say, to oppose it—to oppose it to the end of my life in this House, under whatever shape it may appear. I am asked what I intend to do on the subject of the Test and Corporation Acts? I say, to oppose it. It has so happened that the Test Act is one of the subjects upon which it has never yet been my lot to pronounce an opinion in this House. But yet I have an opinion upon it—and I do not hesitate to declare it—I think that the exertions of the legislature ought to be directed to the redress of practical and not theoretical grievances; and that inasmuch as any meddling with the Test Act might go to prejudice that great question the success of which I have most truly at heart, therefore I will oppose it. I hope I have spoken out.'[1]

The consequence then of this alliance, as far as the nation was concerned, was that nothing was to be done. The people however were fond of believing in the good intentions of the new minister, and continued to congratulate themselves on the secession from power of the high Tory party with Lord Eldon at their head. It was generally thought, that a step in advance had in fact been won, by the retirement of this class of politicians. The division in the Tory ranks became every day more plain and marked; and whatever might occur, a healing of their differences appeared impossible. Sir John Copley now

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. p. 541.

occupied as Lord Lyndhurst the seat of the old Chancellor, Lord Eldon, and men hoped that the veteran intriguer would by the vigour and ability of his younger rival and successor be kept excluded—and that the last days of the old high Tory party had at length been witnessed. The result justified the expectations.

The session of 1827 wore away in personal recrimination. Abroad, indeed, a powerful sensation followed the break up of the old administration, and the coming of Mr. Canning to office. The oppressed of all nations rejoiced — expecting that some benefit — but what they knew not, was to result from the new order of things in England. There was hope at least, if there was nothing more.

Mr. Canning died. The world mourned his loss, because it supposed that he intended to do good. To show on what this expectation—this opinion rested, would be difficult; but that it was generally entertained is certain. To prove it erroneous was impossible. So, as Mr. Canning was believed to have had his days shortened by the harassing vexations of his position, his memory was honoured as that of a martyr to the cause of freedom.

Lord Goderich, who had, in the palmy days of Lord Liverpool's administration, acquired as Chancellor of the Exchequer the nickname of 'Prosperity Robinson,' passed on the appointment of Mr. Canning to the head of the administration, into the House of Lords, and therein, during his friend's life, had repre-

sented the cabinet. He was now by the king desired to form a ministry. From the Tory opposition no assistance could be expected. They who had refused to act as subordinates to Mr. Canning, were not likely to accept as a leader one of his followers. Lord Goderich was therefore compelled like his great chief to have recourse to the Whigs in order to construct his cabinet. From the first all men perceived that the new administration was destined to an early end. The premier, though possessed of respectable abilities, and well fitted to act the part of a useful subordinate, was wholly without the influence needed in the chief of an administration. The consequence was, that the subordinates quarrelled, and broke up the cabinet. An idle question of etiquette between Mr. Tierney and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Herries, led to the sudden resignation both of Mr. Herries and Mr. Huskisson. The unhappy premier, frightened at his own incapacity, and by the difficulties of his position, immediately followed the example of his colleagues, and returned his dangerous honours to the king, begging permission to resign. The king at once graciously acceded to the noble lord's request, and commanded the Duke of Wellington to form a new administration.

Now began, in truth, the political life of the Duke of Wellington. Hitherto though holding office, and forming one of the cabinet, he had always as a politician been a follower not a leader—a subordinate not a chief. When Lord Liverpool was obliged to retire,

the Duke earnestly declared, that he was himself wholly unfit for the chief post in the administration. His words were remarkable—were long remembered—and were often tauntingly quoted. After having dwelt with an honest and becoming pride upon his successful career as a soldier, and described the high gratification he felt on being placed as commander-in-chief at the head of the army, he used these memorable words—

'Does any man believe that I would give up such gratification in order to be appointed to a station to the duties of which I was unaccustomed—in which I was not wished, and for which I was not qualified; as it must be obvious to your lordships that not being in the habit of addressing your lordships, I should have been found, besides other disqualifications, incapable of displaying as they ought to be displayed, or of defending the measures of government as they ought to be defended in this House by the person thus honoured by his majesty's confidence. My lords, I should have been worse than mad if I had thought of such a thing.'[1]

Believing that Mr. Canning's influence as chief of the administration would dangerously promote the emancipation of the catholics, the Duke withdrew himself not merely from the cabinet of which Mr. Canning was the head, but also from the post of commander-in-chief of the army. On Mr. Canning's

[1] Hansard, N S., vol. xvii. p. 461.

death, however, he consented to resume this office, not feeling the same repugnance to serving under Lord Goderich, that he had entertained to the idea of acting as subordinate to Mr. Canning. To account for this proceeding, without ascribing it to personal dislike, seems almost impossible.[1] That in the mind of the Duke of Wellington, there was no insuperable and bigoted prejudice respecting catholic emancipation his subsequent conduct plainly proved. The probability is, that before he became prime minister, and responsible for the conduct of the government, he had never seriously considered the question, and entertained his then stated opinions respecting it merely on trust—yielding conviction to the authority of others, without any real inquiry into the worth of the opinion to which he subscribed. This belief when he had to give a reason for his determination not to act under Mr. Canning, served the purpose of the moment, and most probably satisfied his own mind at the time, and the wishes of his friends. Having served its purpose, it was forgotten at Mr. Canning's death; and the Duke then, to the satisfaction of the country generally, returned to his old position of commander-in-chief. He bore no dislike to Lord Goderich, and forgot his fears respecting

[1] Walter Scott, certainly a favourable witness, plainly attributes this secession of the Duke to personal feelings, and unhesitatingly blames the whole proceeding. See a letter of his to Mr. Lockhart, dated May 10, 1827, in LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott.*

catholic emancipation when Mr. Canning ceased to exist.

So soon as the Duke of Wellington was appointed prime minister, many objections were vehemently urged against what the objectors termed the unconstitutional nature of the appointment. What this meant none of them very accurately described—though the common explanation was, that the Duke being a soldier ought not to be prime minister because of the danger of the thing. A soldier also was supposed not to be skilled in civil affairs. 'The Duke's experience,' said Mr. Brougham, 'has been purely military, not civil.' 'And though I entertain the highest opinion of the noble Duke's military genius, still I do not like to see him at the head of the finance of the country, enjoying the patronage of the crown—enjoying as he does enjoy the full and perfect confidence of his sovereign—enjoying the patronage of the army, enjoying the patronage of the church — and, in fact, enjoying almost all the patronage of the state.'[1] This language was natural in the existing state of men's opinions and experience. Since the days of Marlborough no soldier had swayed the councils of this country, and the Duke of Wellington had himself, a few months before, sanctioned the general opinion as to the incapacity of a soldier to rule over the civil affairs of the state. Yet there is no rational founda-

[1] Hansard, vol. xviii. p. 56.

tion for any such belief. No man can be a great soldier unless he possess great administrative talent, and this talent is more likely to be brought forth, and fostered by the business of war, than by the management of cases at Nisi Prius; yet because of his habit of speaking, the lawyer is deemed capable of governing, while the soldier whose life is spent in action and not in talk, is considered unversed in what are called the civil affairs of state. The training of the Duke of Wellington was however of a much higher character than any which ordinary statesmen, or soldiers, or lawyers can hope to enjoy. In India, and in Spain and Portugal, he led armies and he governed nations. To feed his armies, and to keep the people for whom he was nominally engaged, obedient and favourable to his cause, he was obliged to bring into action all those great qualities of mind which are needed for the practical government of mankind. Every intricate question of finance, the various and perplexing operations of trade, the effects of every institution, commercial, political, of law and administration,—all had to be understood, weighed, watched, and applied, while he led the armies of England, and in fact governed the people of Spain and Portugal. The vast combinations needed for his great campaigns, made him familiar with every operation of government; and the peculiar relation in which he stood to the people of Spain and Portugal, and their various rulers, called into action every faculty of his mind, and made him profoundly skilled

in the difficult art of leading and controlling men of all classes and of all characters.[1] A great authority, and an opponent, stated that even in the art of exposition in a deliberative assembly, he wanted neither power nor skill. 'It was said,' observed Mr. Brougham, in the House of Commons, during the debate on the address, upon January 29, 1828, 'that the noble Duke was incapable of speaking in public as a first minister of the Crown ought to do. Now I conceive there is no validity in that objection. I happened to be present when the noble Duke last year had the modesty and candour to declare, in another place, that he was unfit for the situation of prime minister; and I really think that I never heard a better speech in the whole course of my life. Nothing could be more suited to the occasion. I never saw less want of capacity in an individual who might be called on to take an active part in debate. This therefore is not my objection to the appointment.'

The exigencies of the new minister's position were great—he met them with his wonted vigour—and overcame them with his usual happy fortune.

The members of the Whig party who had formed a portion of the administration of Lord Goderich retired: and again ranged themselves in the ranks of opposition. They who were known as the friends of

[1] The reader who desires to acquire a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the Duke's difficulties in the Peninsula, and the mode in which he conquered them, should study Napier's history of his campaigns, and his own despatches.

Mr. Canning with hesitation indeed and some risk joined the new ministry. Mr. Huskisson retained the seals of the Colonial Office, which he had held under Lord Goderich—but gave place to Mr. Peel as leader of the House of Commons — Lord Dudley continued Secretary for Foreign Affairs—and Mr. Herries left the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Mr. Goulbourn assumed, and accepted the post of Master of the Mint which Mr. Tierney had resigned. But the really important members of the cabinet, they who gave it its distinctive character, and won the confidence or excited the alarms of the nation, were the Duke of Wellington, the prime minister, Mr. Peel, the Home Secretary, and Lord Lyndhurst, the Chancellor.

The Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel had retired from the councils of the king in company with, and as the world thought upon the advice of the late Chancellor, Lord Eldon. Sir John Copley was by Mr. Canning immediately advanced to be chief of the law, and retained that position upon the reconstruction of the cabinet under Lord Goderich: and the world beheld with some admiration, and no little pleasure, that he continued in possession of the great seal when the Duke of Wellington became prime minister, and Mr. Peel, the pupil, and supposed docile follower of Lord Eldon, once more returned to office.

The advent of the new cabinet was viewed with mixed feelings of hope and fear by all parties. The old Tory party, they whose opinions had been faith-

fully represented, and whose rapturous applause had been obtained by the seceders from the administration of Mr. Canning, thought they had good reason for considering the present change a great victory gained by them over the friends of catholic emancipation. Mr. Peel was considered the very champion of the party styled of the established church—and Oxford gloried in him as her faithful son, and stanch and most fitting representative. He had won the enthusiastic admiration of his friends by the supposed sacrifice to which he had submitted, rather than run any hazard of aiding the catholics by forming a portion of Mr. Canning's administration. He had quitted power from an ardent desire to maintain unaltered the laws affecting the Roman catholics—and his friends delighted to believe, that his return to office was a sure omen of the success of their party, and the stability of these exclusive laws. Yet was this delight somewhat diminished, and some fear created, by the remarkable absence of Lord Eldon from the cabinet to which his attached friend had returned.[1] The character of the Duke of Wellington in some degree contributed to keep this fear alive.

[1] Lord Eldon himself, upon the formation of the cabinet, was not only extremely enraged, but soon began to prophesy that great concessions were about to be made to the catholics. He says, in a letter to Lady F. J. Bankes, dated Feb. 2, 1828, 'Nobody can read the late speeches of Palmerston and Vezey Fitzgerald, without being apprehensive that most dangerous concessions are about to be thought of to the catholics, such as

He had certainly refused to join Mr. Canning—and assigned as the reason of his refusal, the fear he entertained, that Mr. Canning, and Mr. Canning's cabinet, would be friendly to the catholics. But the downright soldier was not supposed to be peculiarly susceptible of any sort of fear—or very much swayed by theological antipathies. But he was known to have remembered in no very friendly spirit certain proceedings of Mr. Canning and some of his friends during the war in the Peninsula; and the world was prone to fancy that personal dislike, rather than religious zeal had led to the Duke's former resignation: and his return to power was not deemed the same powerful guarantee for the continuance of exclusion, that was supposed to be afforded by Mr. Peel's acceptance of office. On the Lord Chancellor's adherence to his former course, there was not placed an undoubting reliance. Lord Lyndhurst had commenced life as a very liberal politician—his religious feelings were not generally thought either very ardent, or very intolerant. To hold the great seal, and keep out Lord Eldon, were, as men believed, the chief objects of his solicitude; and the world fancied that he would be better pleased to retain the vast power of the chancellor, than to assure the eternal exclusion of the catholics from temporal rights.

---

shortly and surely will shake the foundations of the protestant church.'—Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 33. Questions asked in the House of Lords early in the session showed that the lords entertained the same suspicion.

On the other hand, the friends of catholic emancipation could not fail to perceive, that the men who had made that emancipation the great object of their party struggles had seceded from office upon the construction of the present cabinet. The friends of Mr. Canning, indeed, did not object to join an administration, the head of which, and the chief members of which were opposed to any concession; but the Whigs had drawn a marked line between the present ministry and that of Mr. Canning; from him and by him they expected in time to obtain concession—from the Duke of Wellington supported by Lord Lyndhurst and Mr. Peel, they expected nothing but stern refusal. They heard the exultation, and the rejoicing of all who had vehemently resisted every demand made on behalf of the catholics—rejoicing and exultation which arose simply because the present cabinet existed; could they then, the friends of the catholics, believe that these expectations were ill-founded?—could they reasonably entertain any hope that the friends and opponents of concession would be alike deceived?[1] In spite however of all these

[1] The anticipations of the Whigs as to what the government would do were fairly stated by Lord Duncannon in a letter to the Catholic Association. He says, 'For Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Tierney, and Lord Carlisle, I am prepared to assure you now, as I did on a former occasion, that they and their friends were most anxious the question should be brought on, and that it would have had, as it always has had, all the support that, as individuals, they could have given to it. For this opinion, I can have no objection now, or at any other time, to have my

sinister appearances—doubt as to the result stole silently, men hardly knew how or why, upon the public mind. There was a general suspicion that common sense would have great influence over the Duke—and the Duke perfect command over his cabinet:—Anxiety was therefore rife among all classes of politicians.

So soon as the two parties resumed their old positions, they recurred to their old tactics; the Whigs being in opposition, immediately placed upon the notice-book of the House of Commons, all their stock liberal motions; the Tories now the ministry, ceased

---

name used. On the formation of the late government, I thought it my duty as an Irishman to give such advice to my catholic countrymen as I thought it most for their interest to pursue. I thought the agitation of that question at that time, proposed, as it was attempted to be done, by the bitterest opponents of the catholics, would have embarrassed the formation of the government, and I recommended a postponement of that question; but you will do me the justice to recollect, that I stated distinctly then that it was only for that moment; and, indeed, if I could have proposed anything further, I must have been insane to suppose that the catholic people of Ireland would ever consent to such a disgraceful proposition. I will, however, say no more on this subject, leaving it to you, if you think fit, to set it right, as I really think it due, both to Lord Lansdowne and the catholics, that it should be rightly understood. The present posture of affairs is a hopeless one, *as I really think the government as at present constituted almost worse than Lord Liverpool's.* Mr. Lamb, indeed, has the best intentions towards Ireland, and Lord Anglesey goes [to Ireland] with the same intentions, but what can be hoped from any such government after Mr. Peel's speech of last year, in which he took, as the Home Secretary, the complete control of Ireland?'

to be anxious for a discussion of these various questions, and did their utmost to oppose, in place of inviting it. The sudden changes that had so lately occurred, rendered this discussion dangerous to many who would certainly be compelled to vote, and some who would be expected to speak on the subjects thus submitted to the consideration of the House. The consequences of thus voting and speaking no one could now foretel. Uncertainty attended the very being of the administration—and the various actors in the shifting drama might have again suddenly to change their parts—and with their parts their language. The Whigs, however, being out of office deemed the probable consequences less mischievous to themselves than to their opponents—and hoping to create distrust and disunion among the members of the cabinet, lost no time in commencing this attack.

Mr. Tierney at this time might be deemed the nominal leader of the opposition.[1] The most formidable person in their ranks, however, was without doubt Mr. Brougham. He, nevertheless, though the chief strength of their party was never looked upon or trusted as their leader.[2] Ability, no matter how

[1] He had been once formally installed as their leader, but soon resigned. His influence seems to have remained for some years, but hardly survived his acceptance of office under Mr. Canning. *See, in* LORD BROUGHAM'S *Characters,* that of Mr. Tierney. Second series, p. 153.

[2] This assertion is literally accurate. Even during the two succeeding years of 1829 and 1830—although Mr. Brougham

commanding, was never in the estimation of the Whigs deemed of itself sufficient to win for any man the formal leadership of their party. They have often availed themselves, yet not without some reluctance, of the aid of new men undistinguished by birth or connexion, but they have always been careful to maintain the supremacy of their party for one of themselves. By genius the new man might tower above them all; but in station, in power—he was always carefully taught to consider himself a subordinate. Burke at the most brilliant period of his career—when his genius had reached its meridian, and his services were above all price—was yet not admitted a member of that cabinet which his powers had almost alone called into existence: and thus for the present Mr. Brougham was not permitted to assume the name of the Whig leader. Being however of a bolder nature than Burke, more energetic and overbearing, he by himself was a power, giving assistance to, rather than deriving position from the Whigs. This assistance they were glad to receive, intending when the victory might be won, to forget him altogether in the 'divi-

was the chief debater on the opposition benches, he was never formally chosen as the Whig leader—Lord Althorp being usually deemed such, though Mr. Brougham's activity often threw his noble friend into the background. This activity and superiority displeased the Whig aristocracy, and they, in after years, seized the opportunity which events offered of punishing Mr. Brougham, and separating themselves entirely from him. This was not done until he ceased to be useful to their party views. See Appendix A.

sion of the spoils'—or to offer him a portion so poor and valueless as to appear a mark of contempt, rather than a reward. On the present occasion he boldly stood forth and proclaimed himself the champion of legal reform in the House of Commons. Asking and hoping no assistance from his friends, he rested his cause upon its merits, and trusted to his own powers alone as a sufficient means to make those merits known. The elaborate but somewhat desultory speech which he then delivered, was a masterstroke of policy. Its huge length, and unwieldy dimensions compelled attention — its very defects added to its importance: and Mr. Brougham was by public opinion at once separated from and made superior to all who stood beside him in the ranks of opposition. He alone of all the Whigs was divested in some measure, if not completely, of the character of a partisan. They were striving, men believed, for mere party objects—he it was supposed for his country.

Lord John Russell, who had long played the part of a subordinate in the ranks of the opposition, had now assigned to him the Test and Corporation Acts as the subject on which he was to commence the party campaign against the present administration. Mr. Tennyson assumed rather than received the task of moving the disfranchisement of East Retford, in order to confer the right of representation on Birmingham—and these for the moment became the two chief subjects of discussion within the walls of Parliament;—catholic emancipation receiving only passing attention by the legislature, until proceedings out of doors

forced the subject upon their unwilling attention. The people of Ireland under the guidance of Mr. O'Connell took their own cause into their own hands. Trusting no longer to the lukewarm advocacy of parliamentary friends, they proceeded straight forward to their end with the energy of men engaged in their own affairs, and eventually rendered peace and continued oppression of the catholics utterly impossible. As the session advanced, this consequence seemed more and more to be inevitable, and the influence exercised by the state of Ireland upon the decisions of the House of Commons will be immediately apparent.

The wisdom of the Whig-opposition policy was quickly made manifest. The hoped-for disunion in the cabinet came to pass, Mr. Huskisson discovering that his pliability and subservience to the Duke of Wellington were not sufficient to insure his own continuance in office. On the motion of Lord John Russell for a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Mr. Huskisson had spoken against the motion, and voted in the minority, together with the rest of his colleagues. He found, however, that his conduct excited distrust out of doors, that his power was on the wane, and his popularity in great danger. He became anxious, therefore, to show the world that he still retained his independence, and was not prepared to speak and to vote by word of command. The East Retford debate gave him, as he supposed, the opportunity required. By the Duke of Wellington

he had already been treated with something very like contumely; his assertions had been unceremoniously denied; his adherence to the administration had been spoken of as of little value; and his attempts to explain his conduct before his constituents at Liverpool, had been passed by with a contemptuous allusion, indicating that, in the estimation of the premier, whatever his expressions might have been, they were utterly insignificant, and unworthy of notice. Galled by this contumelious proceeding, Mr. Huskisson, in the House of Commons, entered into a long explanation of his conduct, endeavouring to make it appear that he had neither intrigued against his former nor with his present leader, and that in his actual position he was still able to effect the financial reforms which he had long been preparing, and which, with Mr. Canning's aid, he had hoped to bring into immediate and beneficial operation. He found, however, that his influence in the present cabinet was but small, and that he was really displeasing to its head. In order to regain his position, and place himself again favourably before the country, he, in an unhappy hour for himself, adopted a round-about policy with a very downright and plain-spoken man—viz., with the Duke of Wellington himself. During the present session of parliament, two boroughs—Penryn and East Retford—were, by the House of Commons, selected for punishment, in consequence of the bribery and corruption practised there; and it was proposed to transfer the power of electing members from these delinquent boroughs to

the two great towns of Manchester and Birmingham. The government opposed the latter part of the plan, wishing that only one of the towns mentioned should acquire the power of choosing a representative; and that, in the second instance, the right of voting should be extended to the hundred in which the borough was situate. The bill disfranchising Penryn passed the Commons, and was sent up to the Lords. Before the East Retford Bill passed the Commons, the Lords had made manifest their intention to throw out the Penryn Disfranchisement Bill. Mr. Tennyson brought in his bill before this event actually occurred, and thereupon Mr. Calvert moved to extend the right of voting to the inhabitants of the hundred, in place of disfranchising the borough. During one of the preceding debates on the subject, Mr. Huskisson had stated, that if only one borough had been concerned, he should certainly have voted for giving the representation either to Manchester or Birmingham, but that he was not prepared to give that power to both at once. He was now pressed with this statement. Lord Sandon said—

'I recollect that the Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Huskisson) said, that if there were only one case before the House, he would have no hesitation in transferring the franchise, in this instance, to Birmingham. I therefore claim the vote of the Secretary for the Colonies; and I claim it on the very grounds on which his right honourable colleague (Mr. Peel) has rested the defence of his own consistency.'[1]

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xix. p. 808.

Mr. Huskisson attempted to escape from this appeal by asking for delay.

'As to the insertion of Manchester in this bill, it would be irregular, because another bill had been sent up to the Lords which might pass, and in which Manchester was also inserted. The better way, therefore, would be to postpone the decision until the fate of the other bill should be known.'

Mr. Peel, who had also in a previous debate asked the House to ascertain the fate of the one bill before deciding, in the present instance, to give the representation to a great town, was reminded of his argument, and was now urged to vote against Mr. Calvert's amendment. He, however, peremptorily refused, saying that nothing he had said pledged him in the present case. He, therefore, resisted his colleague's request for delay, and refused to vote for transferring the representation to a great town in preference to giving it to the hundred. Mr. Huskisson, feeling himself driven into a corner, voted in opposition to the administration, and against Mr. Calvert's amendment. He himself afterwards thus describes the scene.

'The division took place soon after; the House adjourned, and I went home; not, however, without observing the intelligible looks of some, and hearing the audible whispers of others. Whether from these omens I magnified to myself the impression which the vote might make in other quarters next morning, I will not pretend to determine.'[1]

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xix. p. 922.

But on that morning, at two o'clock, before he went to rest, he wrote to the Duke of Wellington, as the head of the administration, a letter, in which he used these expressions—

'I owe it to you, as head of the administration, and to Mr. Peel, as the leader of the House of Commons, to lose no time in affording you an opportunity of placing my office in other hands, as the only means in my power of preventing the injury to the king's service which may ensue from the appearance of disunion in his Majesty's councils.'

The Duke at once regarded this letter as a formal offer of resignation; and as he thought it would be injurious to the government to solicit Mr. Huskisson not to resign, he accepted his resignation. Mr. Huskisson complained of this interpretation—called the Duke's conduct harsh—and asserted that he had not resigned, but had been removed. Looking at the whole transaction, now when all heat and animosity, if ever felt, must have passed away, it is difficult to understand the matter but as the Duke understood it. Mr. Huskisson expected to have been made much of; he believed that his great services would have been thought of, and that the Duke would have asked him in complimentary phrase to remain where he was, and give the country the great benefit of his advice and counsel. Instead of this, the Duke at once declared that the letter was a formal resignation—that if Mr Huskisson did not so intend it, being 'a sensible man, he knew what to do'—but as for asking him to remain, he would not. As Mr. Huskisson did not

adopt the suggestion conveyed in this language (which was to withdraw his letter), the Duke laid it before the king, and advised his Majesty to accept the resignation, and to give the seals to Sir George Murray. Upon this Lord Dudley, Mr. Grant, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Lamb resigned also. Mr. Huskisson spoke in grandiloquent phrase when explaining his conduct in the House of Commons, insinuating that he and his friends had been made 'a sacrifice, and victims to powerful influences, which were no longer to be stemmed—no longer to be resisted.'

'Have sacrifices and victims been required,' he exclaimed, 'or has it, as I am inclined to believe, been deemed expedient, for the interest of the king's government, to come to a closer union with one party by casting off the other? If so, I wish the separation had been placed on its true grounds. I should greatly have preferred to have been told that from dislike to those measures of policy, which I believe to be for the advantage of the country—from the mistrust of their tendency—and from jealousy and apprehension of the power which office gave me of bringing them forward—it was become necessary to allay certain angry feelings as the only means of securing the steady support of some whose countenance and cordiality are deemed essential to the administration of which the noble Duke is the head.'[1]

In all this he much overrated his own importance.

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xix. p. 940.

The country cared little either for him or his friends. Their retirement was the subject of gossip for a few days in the clubs; but succeeding events soon swept the whole incident out of the recollection of all; and when by a lamentable accident not many months after Mr. Huskisson lost his life, his death made no gap in the political world. The memory of his deeds quickly faded from men's minds, and in the stirring times which immediately succeeded, no one asked what course he would have followed had he still existed, or thought of the influence he might have exercised upon the great events which so soon after occurred.[1]

The composition of the cabinet after the dismissal of Mr. Huskisson and the secession of his friends, appeared more homogeneous than before, and the hopes of the high-church party rose in consequence: for now, so far as success depended upon union and cordiality in the administration itself, the existing exclusion of catholics and dissenters appeared to be insured. The leading members of the cabinet were pledged to oppose any relaxation of the law—and all the security that could be derived from past professions and past conduct was now certainly enjoyed by the exclusionist party. The ascendancy of the church, so far as that depended on the composition of the cabinet, seemed placed beyond doubt or controversy.

Doubt, nevertheless—and even distrust came mysteriously over the minds of this apparently all-power-

[1] Mr. Huskisson was killed in September, 1829.

ful party. Divisions had occurred on Lord John Russell's proposal to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, which proved that perfect reliance could not be placed in the House of Commons by the unyielding friends of exclusion. The ministry on that occasion found themselves in a minority—and Mr. Peel's language in answer to Mr. Huskisson's insinuations respecting the ascendancy of certain parties in the cabinet, increased, rather than allayed the alarm, which the ministerial defeat had excited. He said—

'I stated at an early period of the session that I thought the government of this country could not be conducted on any extreme principles—that it could not be conducted by selecting any one interest as the favourite, but that that course, call it compromise if you will, or by any other name you think proper, was a wise policy which attempted to reconcile conflicting interests, and to do justice alike to all. I never will, in any advice which I may give to the king, be swayed by Mr. Canning's principles, or Lord Liverpool's principles, or by the principles or systems of any other man. I know nothing of the systems of individuals as a member of the government. It is easy to imagine systems and to attach nicknames to opinions, but I will decide upon each question that comes before me by its own merits, by the circumstances of the case, and by the complexion of the times.'[1]

[1] Hansard, N. S., vol. xvii. p. 961.

After events gave a peculiar significance to these expressions.

The vote in the House of Commons in favour of Lord John Russell's motion on the Test and Corporation Acts took place before Mr. Huskisson's resignation, and proved that the state of the public mind had materially changed during the last few months upon the subject of exclusive laws founded on differences in religious belief.[1] The puritan feeling, and the dread of popery, which form so large a part of that feeling, had sunk deep into the public mind of England during the rule of the Tudors and the Stuarts. A large majority of those who read, thought, wrote and spoke, enthusiastically embraced the doctrines on which the reformation was based. In one thing all agreed, who called themselves reformers, and that was to fear and to hate the Church of Rome—and as in those days persecution was in fashion with *all sects and parties*, they of the Church of England no sooner became dominant, than they employed their power in excluding and persecuting the catholics

[1] The acts called the Test and Corporation Acts are, 13 Car. II., s. 2, c. 1; 25 Car. II., c. 2; explained by 9 Geo. II., c. 26. Lord Holland stated, in his speech in the Lords, April 17, 1828, on moving the second reading of the Repeal Bill, some portion of the secret history attending the passing of these measures in the reign of Charles II. The statement is amusing and instructive. See Hansard, vol. xviii. p. 1450; also Blackstone, vol. iv. p. 58, for a succinct account of the acts themselves. That *laudator temporis acti*, and admirer of everything as it was in his days, speaks of these acts as 'securing both our civil and religious liberties.' Vol. iv. p. 438.

whom they hated and feared because of the intolerance and cruelty which the catholics had manifested against all who were under their dominion. But although the reformers agreed in their hatred of popery, they differed much amongst themselves; and the puritan party looked upon the Church of England as very little if at all better than the scarlet lady who sat on the seven hills. Elizabeth had much in her modes of thought, feeling, and action which induced her people to believe that spite of her protestant professions she had a strong leaning to the catholic faith. James also, whose mother was a professed catholic, and who had himself suffered bitter indignity at the hands of the Scotch reformers, was supposed to look with a favouring eye upon a church, which his mother had loved, and which unceasingly exalted the kingly power, and based it on right divine. Charles the First was known to be uxorious—and Henrietta his wife was notoriously a fierce and uncompromising papist. Laud his great minister was also a catholic in heart, and sighed for a cardinal's hat. Charles the Second, and his brother the Duke of York, bred abroad under the eyes of their mother, were always suspected of leaning towards her faith. Charles died in that faith, and James at length justified the public suspicion by openly professing it. Thus the dread of a return to popery was kept alive in all protestant bosoms—and they who played the game of popularity, always in those days excited protestant terrors, and won the favour of the people by proposing measures

for the exclusion of papists from every place of power and profit. The method by which this exclusion was sought to be effected, was by requiring assent to certain doctrines opposed to the Roman-catholic doctrines—and these approved points of faith were comprised in the symbol or creed of the Church of England. They of the reformed party who dissented from the Church of England, allowed their fears and hate of popery to predominate on this occasion over every other consideration—and in their heat to exclude a catholic from the throne allowed the framers of the Test Act to use words, and require a subscription by all who should be advanced to places of trust and emolument, which in reality excluded themselves as well as the papists. The same thing happened with respect to the Corporation Act. During the struggles which occurred between the Parliament and Charles I. the great presbyterian party after they had conquered the king, were themselves ousted from power by the independents. By these Charles I. was brought to the block; the kingly office was abolished and a Commonwealth established. The scenes which followed the death of the king and the subversion of the monarchy, destroyed at length the popularity of all who were opposed to the restoration of the exiled king. A violent reaction followed, and the cry against those who had resisted the despotism of Charles I. and Strafford and Laud, was now as violent as any which had formerly been raised against the king and his supporters. The very presbyterian party which had

mainly contributed to put down the king, joined now in this reactionary outcry, because of their jealousy and hate of the more violent party by whom they had themselves been overturned. In their zeal to oust these *malignants* from power, they employed words and required tests which in fact were found to exclude themselves; and the party of the Church of England, becoming daily stronger, put at length these enactments in force against all without distinction who would not qualify themselves for office in corporations, by subscribing to the doctrines and articles of the church established by law.

The revolution of 1688, although brought about with the consent and assistance of those who dissented from the church, changed very slightly their legal position. The majority of the nation was not in fact prepared for the dethronement of James II., though a very large majority blamed the king's conduct, and desired that some means should be adopted to preserve the nation from papistical dominion. The seven bishops whom James most rashly endeavoured to punish, because they desired to be excused doing what was contrary to law, were revered by the people, not for opposing the king, but simply because they supported a protestant law; and some of these very bishops plainly showed soon after, the spirit by which they had been actuated, by suffering deprivation rather than swear obedience to William, who had dethroned the monarch they had themselves opposed. In such a state of the public mind, William, however liberally

inclined, was unable to relieve the protestant dissenters from the disabilities which their own zeal and intolerance had created. As time wore on, these excluding laws acquired the character of antiquity, and the reverence which attaches to things ancient attached also to them. The dread of a popish king continued also for the greater part of the eighteenth century to sway the popular mind, and indisposed all the timid (who invariably form a large portion of the whole people), and those also who were opposed to change, simply because it is change, from all attempts to alter what they had been taught to consider the fundamental laws of our constitution. The fear of a popish sovereign however at length died away, and was extinguished by the death of the Pretender and his descendants. Tolerant opinions gradually found their way into the popular creed, and they who now played the part of patriots, and sought power through popular favour, found it for their interest to advocate the repeal of those very laws which their predecessors in this cast of political parts had found it for their interest to enact. Thus identical and eternal are the passions and interests of men—thus various and varying are the means by which they seek to gratify the one and pursue the other.

The first step towards the repeal was made by annually passing an act of indemnity for all those who had without taking the requisite oaths assumed office, and exercised power in the corporations of the country. This first step became afterwards an argu-

ment for not taking any other; 'the practical grievance is done away,' said they who strove to retain the badges of ancient hate and persecution,—'why should we trouble ourselves with a theoretical evil?'[1] During the debate which took place on Lord John Russell's motion on February 26, 1828, the whole argument in favour of continuing the law was shortly and forcibly stated by one whose steadfast adherence to one set of opinions, spite of change in others, gives to himself and his statements the sort of value we attach to an old newspaper or an old costume. The thing itself is of no intrinsic worth—but by looking at it, we seem to live in the past again,—we have before our eyes things which in their day were of some worth, and were valued, but which have been now superseded by other and more useful appliances; we keep them in our cabinets as objects of antiquarian

[1] Mr. Canning used this argument upon the memorable occasion when he was explaining his intentions as prime minister in March, 1827. The words have been already quoted above. 'I think that the exertions of the legislature ought to be directed to the redress of practical and not theoretical grievances; and that inasmuch as any meddling with the Test Act might go to prejudice that great question, the success of which I have most truly at heart, therefore I oppose it.' Unfortunately, the knowledge of mankind acquired by long experience had taught Mr. Canning that he must expect to have opponents, and not friends, in the dissenters, when he was endeavouring to emancipate the catholics, if these dissenters were themselves relieved from oppression. Intolerance is but too apt to arise in the minds of most sects, unless they themselves dread persecution; and this dread even does not always produce this beneficial result. [This was written in 1849, and without the experience of 1851.]

interest, but do not read the one or wear the other. The speaker here referred to was Sir R. Harry Inglis, who said—'The dissenters of the present day enjoy the fullest rights of conscience; and I am willing to admit, that there is nothing in their overt acts from which I apprehend any danger. With some of them I am intimate, for many more I have the highest respect; but it is perfectly clear that the principles of dissenters conscientiously opposed to the church can never give the same undivided allegiance to the constitution in church and state which a churchman does. The principle, if carried to the same extent as formerly, would produce the same results. The laws which restrain dissenters are, and will ever be, left inoperative so long as those principles slumber also; but I think they should be retained for the purpose of being exerted in extreme cases, if such should ever arise. In fact, a richly endowed church with all its privileges and immunities, will always be an object of jealousy to those who differ from it, but connected as it is with the constitution, the state is bound to protect it against any dangers from any quarters. Dangers will always exist; and if the present disabilities were removed, and dissenters placed upon the fullest equality as to power with the church, some new question, perhaps of property, would immediately be started, in which new struggles and new dangers would arise. The question of tithes would probably come; and as we should have followed the example of America in giving no preference to the church, we

should be called upon to follow it further, and to enact, that no man should pay anything to any pastor but his own. (Hear, hear.) I accept the cheer from the honourable member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) as a proof that my inference is correct; that there are those who would go so far.—No, sir, differences must always exist; and the removal of the present matter of grievance will only bring the discontent one step nearer. I therefore prefer that the contest shall still continue about the outworks, and that we should not surrender them, because I am too sure that in that case we should have to fight for the citadel.'[1]

The grievance suffered by the dissenters in consequence of these acts was not certainly of great moment, being rather in the form than the substance. They had for many years been annually, as a matter of course, shielded from harm by the act of Indemnity, which raised no discussion and excited no opposition. During the war, the feeling of grievance was in the most part forgotten amidst the turmoil and dangers which beset the whole people. There was no time for a consideration of things not actually affecting our very existence as a people. Dissenters lived and died, carried on contests for office, lost and won them, enjoyed and resigned the corporation honours, powers, and emoluments, without a murmur—indeed, without apparently a thought bestowed upon the humiliation attendant on their dissenting faith. Peace gave them respite from real troubles; and as there is a

[1] Hansard, vol. xviii. p. 714-15.

luxury in woe, and much pleasure to some people in deeming themselves sufferers for righteousness' sake, the dissenters at length discovered that they were unhappy. And the Whigs were ready to sympathise with the suffering sects, to complain of the hardships attending their condition, and to propose a redress of their grievances. At first the complaint did not excite much attention. In ten years not a dozen petitions were presented to parliament on the subject. Party exigencies at length however produced the feeling which it professed to pity. By talking of this grievance people began at last to think it really was a thing much to be deplored and resented,—a cry was raised, the opposition were delighted, and gladly seized upon the occasion, since it gave them the means of annoying an administration deemed peculiarly intrusted with the mission of protecting the church. When the question, however, was plainly stated, no rational man could refuse assent to the proposal of repealing, at once, a law which was, as a matter of course, kept constantly repealed by annual enactments. Mr. Peel nevertheless thought that he was bound to speak and vote against it; the holders of office followed their leader, but the House of Commons refused to be dragged through the mire into which the ministry had chosen to throw themselves. The motion of Lord John Russell was carried by a large majority.[1]

[1] See Hansard, vol. xviii. p. 781. The majority was 44 against the ministers. Ayes, 237; noes, 193.

This event, considered simply as deciding the question in debate, was of little importance. If looked upon, however, with reference to Mr. Peel's subsequent career, and the conduct of the Duke of Wellington's administration, it will be ever memorable in our annals. On February the 28th, the House resolved itself into a committee to consider the repeal. Mr. Peel proposed a few hours' delay, as he and the administration had as yet had no sufficient time to determine upon the course they ought to pursue. The Whigs vehemently resisted this proposal, and Lord Milton rudely blurted out the suspicion which was in his own heart at least, and which probably was shared by many of his friends.

'Away with these idle pretences,' he exclaimed, 'which those who make them know to be pretences; their only object being to regain the vantage ground they have lost, and by delay to defeat the dissenters, and not the dissenters only, but the best interests of the church.'[1]

Mr. Peel, stung by this rude outbreak, lost his temper, declined further to interfere with the matter, and left the House from pique, it was supposed, being followed by the greater part of the administration.[2] This startled the Whigs with Lord John Russell at their head—he declared that Mr. Peel's proposal he was convinced had been made in good faith—Lord Milton expressed sorrow for what had occurred—and

[1] Hansard. vol. xviii. p. 830.

[2] He however went, as was his wont, to—dinner!

good humour was restored by mutual explanations. But after the second reading of the bill, and when it was in committee, Mr. Peel took the first step in a course of policy which has[1] been to him the cause of much honour—great and harassing vexation—has kept him before his countrymen, an object of interest to all, but which has subjected him to more vituperation than is usually bestowed even by politicians on opponents. The great church party to which he became in early life allied, had for years looked upon him as their chosen champion; their most unbending—most powerful supporter. They could not without great difficulty bring themselves to believe that this, their select and most honoured friend, could change his course, and betray the fortress, which he had been especially chosen to defend. On the present occasion, when he determined no longer to oppose the measure of repeal, but suggested, that a sort of compromise should be adopted, by requiring only, a declaration from dissenters who accepted corporation offices, 'that they would not employ the power of those offices to injure or subvert the protestant church by law established in these realms, or to disturb it in the possession of those rights and privileges to which it is by law entitled,' his old friends conceived, indeed, that

[1] I left the word 'has' here. The whole of this portion of my work was composed before the death of Sir Robert Peel, and would have been published in its present state were he alive.—I hope the explanation in the Preface will have sufficiently explained my views and feelings upon this matter.

he had made an unwise concession, but never for a moment dreamed of accusing him of treachery or defection. When however in time, still greater changes occurred, and more important concessions were made, rage and hate succeeded to trust and affection. This first step in a deviating course was remembered and stigmatized as the first act of treachery,—the commencement of a deliberate conspiracy against the power and supremacy of his former friends,—of that party which had given him power, and raised him into importance.

The compromise was accepted by the proposers of the repeal, the declaration as framed by Mr. Peel was inserted—and the bill was passed and sent up to the Lords. When in that House, the bill was much discussed, much idle talk was indulged in, some amendments were carried, and various attempts were made to defeat the measure. Lord Eldon employed all his astuteness and authority to destroy the effect of the measure, after he found it impossible to reject the bill. Throughout the discussions which took place, he plainly evinced his soreness at having been left out of the ministerial arrangements, and sneered at his pupil, and former friend and follower, Mr. Peel, in a manner which showed the intensity of his rage and the weakness of his capacity. The only sarcasm which his ingenuity could supply to his hate, was a poor joke upon the march of intellect, which he truly described, as having long since passed himself. The language he employed, proved that he expected con-

cessions of more importance than the present—his bigotry had become alarmed—and his vanity and self-love had been so severely wounded by his exclusion from office, that he was glad of any opportunity which permitted him, under the pretence of guarding the interests of the church, covertly to attack and annoy his former friends and associates. While in office he was accustomed constantly to express anxious wishes for the hour of his retirement. His fervid patriotism, however, forced him to retain his power, and the profit and patronage attendant thereon. When his friends found for him that opportunity of withdrawing gracefully from public life which he had been unable to find for himself, he was fierce in his resentment of their officious zeal—covering his anger and disappointment with a thin disguise of resignation and a poor pretence of Christian charity. The closing scenes of this man's career were a wretched exhibition of impotent spite. The bill for the repeal of the Tests passed the Lords notwithstanding his opposition — and proved the harbinger of greater changes yet to come.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS TO THE END OF THE SESSION OF 1829.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

ALTHOUGH the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts had been carried by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament, the ministry were beginning to feel themselves in an uncertain position. The cordiality which had once held all portions of the Tory party together no longer existed. The section called Mr. Canning's friends, had personal grounds of quarrel with the administration, so had Lord Eldon, and the high-church party was offended by the late concessions to the dissenters in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Events rapidly occurred, which served still further to weaken the administration, and eventually compelled them to have recourse to their old opponents the Whigs for support. Thus a ministry supposed to be one of extraordinary vigour and solidity—trusted, too, at first by its friends of the high-church party with unhesitating confidence, gradually but rapidly fell into a state of deplorable weakness; lost the support

and confidence of its old friends, without gaining that of its former opponents, upon whose support it was in the end obliged to depend even for its mere existence.

The question of catholic emancipation was nominally considered and formally stated to be an open question with this administration as it had been with that of Lord Goderich, Mr. Canning, and Lord Liverpool. But as the chief men in it, more especially the Duke of Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst, the Chancellor, and Mr. Peel, stood all as strongly pledged against concession as it was possible for statesmen and party-men to be, appearances were all opposed to any change in the legal condition of the catholics. This was the opinion generally entertained, and the leaders of the people in Ireland, in despair of any relief from parties in the legislature, resolutely threw themselves upon the people, and to them confided the success of their cause, and the safety of themselves.

Soon after the accession of George IV. insurrection and famine in Ireland attracted the attention of the cabinet to that country, and the lord lieutenant, Lord Talbot, was suddenly recalled, because supposed unequal to the exigency of the times; and Marquis Wellesley was appointed in his place.[1] Lord Wel-

[1] The Duke of Wellington himself was at this period of extraordinary danger and difficulty thought of for the post of Lord Lieutenant. Nov. 22, 1821, Lord Sidmouth wrote to Lord Liverpool, 'The letters received from Ireland yesterday and

lesley had always been known as one favourable to emancipation, but his appointment was not for the purpose of creating any hopes in the catholics, and thereby allaying discontent. His capacity was deemed equal to the difficulty of the position to which he was called—and the government hoped that his skill in the administration of affairs would suppress the insurrectionary spirit then prevalent, and devise methods for the maintenance of the future peace of the country without any concession on the subject of emancipation. The administration had ceased to fear the proposal to emancipate the catholics as a weapon of mere party warfare—and were willing to ascribe the difficulties of the Irish government to anything rather than the question of catholic disabilities. The tithes at that time [1821] excited remark and animadversion on the part of the landlords of Ireland, and were considered as the fruitful parent of discord and outbreak. There is, no doubt, much of truth in this opinion—and as the collection of tithes interfered with the rents of the landowners, they were not averse to dealing summarily with the evil. The government being glad to have attention directed towards anything rather than emancipation, listened with some complacency to the complaints of Mr. Hume and Sir John Newport on this subject

---

to-day have strengthened the impressions which I wrote to you yesterday. I am satisfied that the government of Ireland ought to be instantly placed in the hands of the Duke of Wellington.' See *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. iii. p. 376.

of tithe. A Composition Act was introduced and carried—Lord Wellesley framing the measure and Mr. Goulbourn, as chief secretary, proposing and taking charge of it in the Commons. But the act was quickly found not to be the panacea expected—and as time wore on, Lord Wellesley became more and more convinced that there was little chance of peace in Ireland, unless emancipation were granted, and he made no secret of his opinion. When Mr. Canning became prime minister, George IV. professed to be alarmed at the preponderance of the pro-catholic party, as it was called, in the cabinet—and in order to allay the alarm of his Majesty, Mr. Canning recalled Lord Wellesley from Ireland and sent Lord Anglesey there in his stead, because he was known to be violently opposed to all concession. Mr. Canning, however, died before Lord Wellesley's actual return—for Lord Anglesey, though appointed, did not immediately take possession of the government. Upon Mr. Canning's death, Lord Goderich succeeded and retired; and at length, when the Duke of Wellington was in office, Lord Wellesley, his brother, was superseded in fact by the successor appointed in his place by Mr. Canning. This circumstance has induced many people to suppose that Lord Wellesley was really displaced by the Duke of Wellington.[1] But Lord Anglesey showed that he had spoken hastily

[1] Among others, Lord Cloncurry assumes this to have been the fact, and calls Lord Anglesey 'the Wellington Lieutenant.' The facts were as I have stated them.

and in ignorance when he declaimed violently in the House of Lords, and before he was appointed to the government of Ireland. So soon as he was brought into direct contact with the difficulties of his situation, he saw, and seeing, acknowledged, that the denial of emancipation was an injustice which must perpetuate the discord and misery which had so long afflicted that country. Thus the appointment which had been expressly made to satisfy the bigotry of the king served only to strengthen the cause of the catholics; by showing that a man prepossessed against them was unable to resist the force of truth and justice when these were allowed to have their due influence on his mind. Lord Anglesey's declarations and conduct, however, soon brought down upon him the anger of the Duke of Wellington—and he was suddenly recalled by the military premier. The reason given by the Duke of Wellington for the recal of Lord Anglesey being, that he was on *friendly* terms with Lord Cloncurry, who had been once present at a meeting of the Catholic Association, and that he treated Mr. O'Connell with something like civility. The Duke of Northumberland was sent in Lord Anglesey's place, and remained there till in the course of events the Duke of Wellington was himself displaced, and Lord Grey and the Whigs came into power—and thus, strange to say, catholic emancipation was carried by a violent anti-catholic premier—with the aid of a leader of the House of Commons whose whole public life had been passed as a determined enemy of the catholic claims, and also during

the viceroyalty of one who became lord lieutenant of Ireland, simply because to great rank he added as a qualification the reputation of being a vehement opponent of every proposed concession to the catholics.

The Tithe Commutation Act, though a great boon to the landlords, did little for the pacification of the country,[1] because with the whole catholic population the feeling still continued, that they were a persecuted people. This feeling gave Mr. O'Connell his power, and enabled him to gather together, and employ as a vast engine of agitation, the celebrated Catholic Association.

This Association, however, against which king's speeches and acts of parliament had been directed in vain, and which now excited the ire of the Duke of Wellington, and was denounced by him as the great cause of Irish discontent and disturbance—this Association had already given proof of its docility when fairly treated, or when it expected fair treatment. So soon as Mr. Canning came into office they voluntarily dissolved themselves, believing that minister honestly intent on doing them justice. Their hopes, however, quickly fell even during Mr. Canning's life, and were utterly extinguished by his death; and upon the coming of the Duke of Wellington to the chief power in the state, the voice of the great leader of the

[1] This act was well intended, and was so far a benefit that it devised a means by which the inequality, and therefore the injustice, of the tithe might be cured. But tithe being public property, no portion of it should have been given to the landlords.

Irish catholics was again heard calling his countrymen together. That voice found an echo in every catholic bosom in Ireland. It acted like a spell upon the quick hearts of her people. Mr. O'Connell again reigned supreme in Ireland.

In the history of mankind there have been few instances of a power so extraordinary as that which Mr. O'Connell now exercised over his countrymen. He was himself thoroughly an Irishman—endowed with many great powers—wanting many qualities, without which no man can be deemed really great. Of a commanding presence, gifted with a beautiful and flexible voice; also with great quickness, versatility, wit, and the power of compressing a long argument into a short and epigrammatic sentence—he seemed formed by nature for the very part which the peculiar condition of his country called upon him to enact. His early education had given his manners something of an ecclesiastical smoothness when in the society of gentlemen—more particularly English gentlemen; but when addressing his own countrymen, he could assume (perhaps *resume* might be the more correct word) a *rollicking* air, which completely won the hearts of the exciteable peasantry whom he sought to move, and over whom he indeed ruled with an absolute despotism. With the catholic priesthood he had also great influence, and by their aid obtained and continued his extraordinary power over his uneducated countrymen. When speaking of the priesthood, or to a priest, the demeanour of Mr. O'Connell, indeed, was so deferential as to appear a

perfect prostration of mind and body to ghostly dominion. His strict observance of the forms of his religion, the fervour of his outward piety, won the confidence and esteem of the Irish catholic clergy. They believed him a true and obedient son of the church—they trusted him, and finding him endowed with great ability, they, in their turn, followed and supported his political agitation. This mutual confidence was greatly promoted by the character of Mr. O'Connell's piety, in which terror played no common part. Subject to the influence of strong passions—of undoubting faith, but also liable to fits of despondency and fear, he was just the man to be an active and useful instrument in the hands of an astute and grasping priesthood. In most cases in which an alliance takes place between a layman and a priest, there is a lurking mutual distrust, which, spite of every art and disguise, betrays itself from time to time. But in the instance of Mr. O'Connell no such distrust seems ever to have arisen on either side. The priests of his church were too sagacious to fail in accurately appreciating the extent and character of their power over his mind. They knew his weakness and their own strength; they had no fear, consequently, when aiding him to acquire power over the peasantry;—because they were sure that this power would never be employed to diminish or even to check their own spiritual influence, and temporal authority and wealth. A perfect mutual cordiality and confidence appeared to exist, and we believe did in reality exist, between them and Mr. O'Connell; and great advantage

resulted to both parties from this alliance. The benefit which Mr. O'Connell received from the priests he amply repaid by the many political services which he rendered to the whole of his catholic countrymen.

He was a skilful lawyer;—thoroughly acquainted with the character of his countrymen, and ready at all times to aid them when subject to accusation by the government, or quarrelling among themselves. They who have witnessed his conduct on criminal trials and at *Nisi Prius*, describe him as unrivalled in the dexterity with which he managed a jury; while those who have heard his legal arguments before the judges in Dublin, speak of them as models of forensic skill.[1] The contrast between his manner on these different occasions proved his marvellous versatility, and ought to have prepared the House of Commons for his admirably appropriate demeanour, when he first appeared before them, as the one, great representative of Roman-catholic Ireland. He was at all times a finished actor, and could assume, or throw off at once and completely, any part he chose. The familiar buffoonery, the sly fun, the coarse, nay almost vulgar but really artful pathos and sarcasm of the *counsel*, on the circuit, whether defending a prisoner

[1] Lord Eldon gives this half favourable and unwilling testimony:—

'Mr. O'Connell pleaded as a barrister before me in the House of Lords on Thursday; his demeanour was very proper, but he did not strike me as shining so much in argument as might be expected from a man who has made so much noise in his harangues in a seditious association.'—Twiss, *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 553.

in the Crown Court, or engaged in a cause at *Nisi Prius*, were all entirely laid aside, and succeeded by a simple, grave, and even polished demeanour, when *in Banco* he had to argue before the judges of the superior courts. And this subdued but still natural manner, how different was it from that of the fierce demagogue, the impassioned accuser of his country's oppressors, who led the vast assemblies which attended the meetings of the Catholic Association! On this arena he seemed to revel in his freedom—to throw away restraint—to give up all command over his feelings—to make himself, indeed, his passions' slave. But amid what appeared his wildest ravings, he was ever truly master of himself;—assuming the licence of an unbridled tongue, under the guise of an overbearing indignation;—making his passion an excuse, when it was, in fact, the pretence—he forced others really to feel the indignation, of which he exhibited only a finished imitation. In the House of Commons every trace of the ranting, rampant demagogue entirely disappeared. In the whole range of rhetoric difficulties, nothing approaches that of appealing successfully in the House of Commons to any romantic sentimentality. All who have been accustomed to address various assemblies of men, must have discovered, that appeals to passion, generous sentiment, romantic honour, are generally grateful only to simple and unlettered audiences. That as the audience becomes composed of men of a more finished education, of a larger experience in the ways of men, just in the

same degree all such passionate appeals become distasteful, and therefore difficult, not to say impossible. The taste becomes more fastidious—the feelings, by worldly contact, more blunted—and suspicion more ready and more quick-sighted. What would make an assembly of peasants weep, would probably send the House of Commons to sleep, or would keep them awake simply by exciting their contempt and disgust. Mr. O'Connell knew this well, and further, he was aware that the assembly into which he entered, when he entered the House of Commons, was as courageous as fastidious. That it was as difficult to excite their fear as it was easy to offend their taste. To bully them he knew was dangerous—to frighten them impossible — to persuade them out of their former convictions, almost hopeless; but to amuse and interest them—to command their attention and respect by wit, knowledge, clear and forcible statement and accurate reasoning, and sometimes by rare and felicitous and finished touches of passionate argument, to excite and almost convince them,—all this, he was aware, was within the power of a great orator. Proudly conscious that he could aspire to this high calling, with a calm self-possession he applied himself to his last most difficult task of conquering the attention—the respectful attention—of an adverse House of Commons, and—succeeded.

That Mr. O'Connell's powers were of the highest order cannot be denied—that few men have had opportunities of rendering great services to their

country, so numerous and happy as he had, is also certain. It must however be confessed that his great ability and glorious opportunities were of comparatively little use either to himself or others—and that few men have so long and to such an extent engaged the attention of the world, and have passed away, leaving so little behind them by which they can be worthily remembered.

To assume the manner, and employ the language that would please a particular assembly, and contribute to the attainment of a given end, was no difficult task for so finished an actor as Mr. O'Connell. But to be observant of the truth—to sacrifice selfish purposes—to withstand the popular prejudice that created his power, required a mind trained from infancy to obey the dictates of the exalted morality fitted for a free people, and which among them alone can be found. Unfortunately for his fame and the happiness of his country, Mr. O'Connell was tainted with the vices produced by that dominion against which he reared a gallant front. The slavery that he attempted to vanquish, had exercised its baneful influence over his own mind. That carelessness respecting truth which always attends the slave's condition, deformed the mind of him who was destined in one remarkable instance to overcome the very tyranny which marked with ignominy the race to which he belonged.

The Irish people had real and great grievances to complain of. No art of a rhetorician was needed to

make the misery of Ireland a theme of touching complaint—of indignant rebuke. The plain statement of her wrongs was indeed the most eloquent appeal that could be made to the justice of mankind. The people of England were ignorant of the true state of things in Ireland—and the real service which Mr. O'Connell rendered his country was making her wrongs known to the English nation. His constant reiteration of this miserable history, forced the subject upon the attention of England. The great mistake he made was the confounding the people of England with the oligarchy which governed Ireland. Had he steadily connected the cause of freedom and good government in his own country with the same great cause in ours, he would not have been thwarted in his endeavours by the wounded self-love of the English nation. The wild talk in which he indulged, in order to maintain his sway over the Irish peasantry and the Roman catholics of the towns, gave great and not unnatural offence to the middle classes of England. The exigencies of his position accounted for these errors, but did not diminish their mischievous effects.

So soon as Mr. Canning died, Mr. O'Connell applied himself to the task of exciting the whole Roman-catholic population; with the aid of the priesthood he was able to spread his organization over the whole country, and assume in fact the government of Ireland. The parliamentary friends of catholic emancipation professed to be shocked by this conduct, and took every opportunity of expressing their disappro-

bation of his proceedings: and the Duke of Wellington stated that the excitement caused by the Catholic Association prevented all possibility of granting the catholics the privileges which they demanded. In this cant the Irish members of the House of Commons eagerly joined—and yet it was apparent to every man of common sense in and out of the House, that the sole cause of the attention paid to the question of catholic emancipation, and the demands of the Irish people, was the trouble given by Mr. O'Connell and his formidable organization. Had there been quiet in Ireland, the rulers both in England and Ireland would have adduced this very quiet to prove that no grievances existed, and would have slumbered over the evils which left their repose undisturbed.

The parliamentary opposition taking advantage of the popular excitement, determined to assail the administration with a motion respecting emancipation. The existing House had indeed already been asked to express an opinion on the subject, and had declared against concession. Since then, however, great changes had taken place, and personal feelings had been variously enlisted by party views and party disputes in new combinations; so that it was impossible to say what might be the result of another effort. The public out of doors also were daily becoming more enlightened; enlarged views both of political economy, and of the science of government generally, were becoming common among all the thinking and writing men of the country. The

terrors and confusion of the great European war had now so long passed away, that a new generation had sprung up, whose minds had been trained, instructed, and swayed by the thoughts, wants, and wishes, which continued peace had created. Liberality and kindly feelings had followed in the train of peace, and men began to wonder at the stern doctrines of exclusion and hate which their fathers conceived to be absolutely necessary for the welfare and even safety of the state. The opposition in parliament were now also relieved from all the restraints which their connexion with Mr. Canning had imposed. They desired to create confusion in the ministerial ranks, and found no more powerful means to this end than was afforded by the proposed advocacy of the catholic claims. Sir F. Burdett consequently moved, in the House of Commons, after an elaborate speech,—

'That this House do resolve itself into a Committee, to consider the state of the laws affecting his Majesty's Roman-catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland with a view to such a final and conciliatory adjustment as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom, to the stability of the protestant establishment, and to the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of his Majesty's subjects.'

The debate which followed was only remarkable from its result, and the reiteration of Mr. Peel's still unmitigated opposition. The House of Commons, which had before, in 1827, determined to resist

all concession, now, in 1828, by a majority of six, declared in its favour. The argument was by Sir F. Burdett placed chiefly upon the ground,, that an obligation to concede emancipation to the catholics had been incurred by the treaty of Limerick, and the greater part of the debate was a discussion of the meaning of the articles of this treaty, and the supposed obligation thereby incurred. There was little of value in the speeches on the one side or the other.

The House having assented to the resolution, sent it to the Lords, in order to obtain their concurrence in the principle it enunciated; and the debate which occurred on Lord Lansdowne's motion, that the Lords should assent to the resolution of the Commons, was on many accounts really remarkable. The speech of Lord Lyndhurst was an acute and masterly advocacy of the policy of opposing all concession. That of Lord Plunkett was as finished a specimen of argument and rhetoric in support of concession. Lord Eldon only proved either that he had outlived the powers which the world once supposed him to possess, or that he really never possessed them. Lord Wellesley spoke the language of a generous and enlightened statesman in supporting the motion of Lord Lansdowne, as did the Duke his brother (paradoxical as the assertion may appear,) while opposing it. For with the practical good sense which has ever distinguished him, the Duke at once contemptuously flung aside every theological argument upon the

question, explicitly declaring that the disabilities of the catholics were not imposed, because of the supposed truth or error of their religious belief. 'My lords, my own opinion is,' said the Duke, 'that we have never objected to the Roman catholics on the ground that they believe in transubstantiation or in purgatory, or in any other of the peculiar doctrines by which they are distinguished—doctrines with which a right reverend prelate thought it his duty to find fault. But, my lords, we objected to their opinions, because upon those opinions was founded a system of political conduct. . . . . The question then resolves itself into one of expediency; and I ground my opposition to it, not on the peculiar doctrinal points of the Roman-catholic faith, but because of the nature of the Roman-catholic church government.'[1] Mr. Brougham, on a subsequent day, in the House of Commons, congratulated the country upon this declaration, considering it an augury of better things to come, in spite of the Lords having negatived the motion of Lord Lansdowne by a majority of forty-four. Thus, as far as parliament was concerned, was the question disposed of for the present session. By a curious fatality, Mr. Peel made this remark on it, by way of leave-taking for the year 1828—

'As the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett) has expressed a hope that the present administration would take up this question in the next session, and

[1] Hansard, vol. xix. p. 1290.

introduce some measure for its settlement, lest any misconception should go abroad respecting my sentiments, I am anxious to speak upon this point for myself, and myself alone. Under the constitution of the present government, each individual member of it is at liberty to entertain and support his own opinion regarding this question. Conceiving, then, that it is only necessary for me to state my own individual opinion on the subject, I would refer the honourable baronet and the House to the declaration which I have repeatedly made respecting it, and speaking then as an individual member of the government, I explained, as I was at liberty to do, my own sentiments on the question. To that declaration, and to those opinions, I still adhere, and I conceive that in so saying, I have said enough to satisfy the House that my sentiments on the subject remain unaltered.'[1]

The right honourable gentleman seems to have had some foreshadowing of what the ministry would determine to attempt—but he seems also, in his anticipations of what he himself was about to do, to have conceived there would be on his own part a sort of desperate fidelity to his preconceived opinions. Or, was it, that he felt a change going on within himself which he feared to think of,—and which he endeavoured to arrest by these marked and almost gratuitous declarations? When the next year came, men looked back with wonder upon the reiterated state-

[1] Hansard, vol. xix. p. 1323.

ments of unalterable faith. Uncharitable opponents, once old and confiding friends, pointed to them as evidence of consummate hypocrisy, of most finished treachery. But now, when passion has for the most part passed away, we are able to regard the whole proceeding calmly, and draw from it the moral which it certainly affords. The charge of inconsistency, if proved, is but too often deemed incontestible proof of guilt—and the accusation is amongst the most prized, because supposed the most effective weapons of attack employed by hostile politicians against each other. Yet who will say that he at any time has all the knowledge upon a given subject, that he can ever acquire—and that no change can occur in his opinions? And will any one who pretends to the character of a wise man, shut his mind against knowledge, and refuse to receive further evidence, lest it should modify his belief? Looking to Mr. Peel's mere personal interest, it is evident that the change which in the next year he declared had occurred in his view of the policy to be pursued by the government, was the cause to him of great pain and loss of power and friends. Why then should we look upon this change as evidence of weakness or of guilt? If the change actually occurred, the declaration of it was a magnanimous declaration—and entitles him to the increased respect of all good men. That his mind so long resisted the force of the evidence, which now changed his opinions, may indeed lessen our opinion of the value of his judgment generally, and lower our esti-

mate of his sagacity, and weaken our confidence in him as a guide for the future. But the change does not justify the accusation so frequently made in this case, of hypocrisy—and deliberate treachery. Mr. Peel well knew what would be the consequence of so sudden and startling a relinquishment of his old opinions. All the inducements to maintain and stand by those old opinions, could not fail to present themselves to his acute and very practical understanding. They must have been duly weighed and could not but be properly appreciated. That under such circumstances, and with the certain expectation of having to encounter unsparing obloquy, and pain that must have seemed almost like humiliation—that he should with all this in view yet determine to avow his change of opinion and act upon it, affords a strong proof both of his sincerity and his disinterestedness. If indeed we could suppose that he did not change—but *that he had long* entertained the opinion which he now expressed—then it would be difficult to suggest language too severe in order properly to describe the treachery and meanness of the proceeding;—or words bitter enough to express our scorn and contempt of him who could thus palter with the truth, and so risk the safety of his country and trifle with the happiness of millions. There is however no evidence to countenance the last supposition.[1]

[1] On the 17th December, 1831, Sir Robert Peel, in consequence of certain taunts by Mr. Macaulay, respecting his con-

Although parliament thus for the moment relieved itself from any further consideration of the question of catholic disabilities, the people of Ireland did not let the subject rest; and fortunately for the views of those who advocated concession, a new and formidable expedient had been discovered and employed by the sagacity of the catholic leader, Mr. O'Connell. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, a popular Irish member of parliament, having accepted office under the Crown, his seat for the county of Clare became vacant. Notwithstanding the popularity of Mr. Fitzgerald, and his known opinions in favour of emancipation, Mr. O'Connel determined to oppose his re-election, and proposed himself as a candidate. The effect of this proceeding was electric. The whole catholic population rose up as one man, braved the power of their landlords, and triumphantly returned the 'Great Agitator.' In this peaceful insurrection, the vast, the uncontrollable power of the Catholic Association was forced upon the consideration of ministers, who now saw that no hope of tranquillity, of happiness, or even of safety remained, so long as the grievance existed which had thus roused and organized the whole catholic people. The priesthood, as a body, were

---

duct upon the question of catholic emancipation, entered into a very elaborate and very successful defence of that conduct. They who desire to know the justification on which Sir Robert depends, should carefully weigh the arguments and statements made by him at that time. He came prepared to make his defence; he had ample time, and all the documents he needed. See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, vol. i. pp. 186-7.

pledged to continue the excitement; every catholic gentleman was by the force of the popular current carried away, and spite of any disinclination was compelled to enter the ranks of the Association, or be socially if not indeed religiously excommunicate. The excitement of the catholics was met on the part of the protestants with similar and equal violence. The people were divided against themselves; they stood in fierce array against one another—and a civil war was inevitable, if the cause of all this discontent and hatred was allowed to remain. The catholics had a just ground of complaint—the protestants had good reason for fear. The one party rose up to vindicate their just demands—the other banded themselves together in order to protect themselves against harm. Parties in this attitude of mutual defiance could not by any power be kept from strife. The man who could most appropriately, and with the greatest effect declare that he dreaded civil war, was he whose whole life had been spent in war; who had beheld it in all its terrible shapes, and witnessed the direful calamities it inevitably entails on mankind. That man was the Duke of Wellington.—Without shrinking he performed the duty imposed on him by the situation he held; and the force of his example as well as the support of his authority, induced Mr. Peel also to change his opinions and to confess that the time for concession had arrived: that unless the nation was prepared for civil commotion, it must grant civil privileges to the millions of Ireland, who,

though they held a faith differing from that of the established religion, were yet fellow-subjects, whose interests and welfare were intimately connected with our own.

To soothe the angry passions and wounded self-love of the dominant and domineering protestant party, the speech from the throne in the session of 1829, while it recommended a consideration of the catholic claims, meaning thereby to recommend concession, spoke also of the dangers arising from the existence of the Catholic Association, and demanded powers by which it might be suppressed. In 1825, an act having a similar purpose in view had been passed, but proved utterly inefficacious. Mr. O'Connell indeed laughed at the measure, declaring that he could drive a coach and horses through every one of its clauses. The reason assigned by the rulers of Ireland and the ministry for not attempting to enforce this law of suppression was, that the exceptions it contained were so wide as to include the Association itself, which it sought ostensibly to put down. The real reason for their inactivity was, however, the danger attendant upon attempting to enforce the law. A fierce resistance, and misery, and bloodshed, would have been the inevitable result of so unwise an endeavour—and ministers preferred the inconvenience arising from the existence of this formidable Association to the horrors of civil commotion. The bill now proposed, like that of 1825, was followed by a bill for the relief of the catholics. In 1825, the Lords passed

the coercion, but threw out the relieving measure. A doubt naturally arose therefore as to the fate of the present measures thus again ominously allied; but this doubt was quickly allayed, when the different circumstances of the two periods were considered. The administration itself—a high protestant administration, at the head of which stood the Duke of Wellington, proposed the present plan, and was bound in honour to see both parts of it passed. All men felt that the doom of exclusion was sealed, so soon as the speech from the throne had been read. Obstinate and factious men, indeed—men whose self-love had been wounded, might originate and for a while continue a sort of dogged resistance, but successful resistance everybody knew to be impossible. The bill therefore for the suppression of the Association was passed under a sort of formal protest by the opposition—a protest which signified nothing, being intended only as a protection to the Whigs, in the almost impossible case of the relief bill not being also passed into a law.

The whole of the session was consumed in the discussion of this measure of relief—and every day served to widen the breach which its proposal had made between the administration and the high-church party. Mr. Peel resigned his seat for the University of Oxford, for the purpose of giving that body an opportunity of deciding whether a minister proposing catholic emancipation and pledged to carry the measure by which such emancipation was to be

effected, should remain member for the University. He was defeated in the election, and Sir R. H. Inglis chosen in his stead. In the House of Lords violent language was employed by those opposed to the ministerial measure and personal anger carried so far, as to lead to a duel between the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea. This event was a cause of sorrow to all sensible men. They grieved to see the Duke of Wellington giving in a moment of anger the sanction of his great authority to so foolish and barbarous a practice. The imputation of cowardice is one hard to be borne. If the charge is supposed to be justified, the person labouring under it loses not merely his social position, and is subject to great personal indignity, but he is also deprived almost entirely of the power to do good, whatever may otherwise be his ability, worth, or capacity. In those cases, then, in which the imputation of cowardice, and the consequent dishonour attending it, can be employed with effect, a good man—acknowledging fully the folly and barbarism of that appeal to arms—may find himself forced in obedience to the imperious demands of society to expose himself to the personal danger which results from it. It may sometimes be the shortest and the easiest mode of retaining whatever power to do good his position or his ability has given him. But in the Duke of Wellington's case, no such imputation could have been hazarded—and his forbearance under insult would have been esteemed by his country as a magnanimous disregard

of vexatious annoyance, and would have been appreciated as a proof both that his temper was under the serene control of reason, and that he disdained to avail himself of this wretched means of exhaling his passion, or satisfying his revenge. The nation felt humiliated when they learned that their great hero had submitted to the folly of a duel.

Some other incidents occurred during the passing of the measure, which exercised a still more mischievous effect upon the power of the administration. The defection of ancient friends compelled the ministry to rely for aid upon their former opponents.[1] This aid was willingly given to carry the measure proposed for the relief of the catholics—but good policy required that the old friends, who had utterly and for ever renounced all connexion with the Duke and Mr. Peel, should have been permanently replaced, by those who upon the present occasion had aided the administration in carrying through the measure they had proposed; and care should have been taken not only to make the measure itself a bond of union between the ministerialists, the Whigs, and the great catholic party and their leader, to whom the ministry had rendered

[1] At this period, rumour says, and the rumour is supported by high authority, that the office of Master of the Rolls was offered to Mr. Brougham; the Duke of Cleveland being the person through whom the offer was conveyed. The mode of making it was an inquiry on the part of the Duke, directly of Mr. Brougham, whether, if the place were offered, it would be accepted. The answer was said to have been decidedly in the negative.

so signal a service; but every fair precaution should also have been adopted to make the service gracious as well as great. That the manner in which a benefit is conferred, is no less important than the extent of it, is indeed an old, but still a valuable remark—unfortunately it is but too often neglected. In the present instance it was signally so. Mr. O'Connell, before the passing of the act, by which he and all catholics were rendered eligible to sit in parliament, had been elected member for the county of Clare. The insurrection of the catholic forty-shilling freeholders against their landlords, had in various ways startled and alarmed the government and the legislature—and they were induced, partly from fear, and partly from a vain desire to conciliate the high-church party, to introduce an enactment with their measure of relief by which the forty-shilling franchise was abolished—and with still greater folly, though with not less injustice, they were induced to deny the right of Mr. O'Connell to his seat in the House of Commons unless he took the oaths that were required when he was elected, but which had been superseded by a new form before he proposed to take his seat. By these unwise proceedings, the ministers failed to win back their former friends, though they made an implacable foe of Mr. O'Connell—and by thus creating a new grievance, they did their utmost to continue the existence of his great and mischievous power over the minds of his countrymen.

Though the parliament had met on the 5th of

February, the measure of relief was not introduced till the 5th of March; the intervening period having been occupied in receiving petitions for and against the proposed concession; discussing in the House of Commons the bill for the suppression of the Catholic Association, and also in the re-election of a member for the University of Oxford. On the 3rd of March Mr. Peel took the oaths and his seat as member for Westbury; Sir Manasseh Lopez having made a vacancy by retiring from that borough, so soon as the University had decided against her once favourite representative.

On the 5th Mr. Peel submitted to the House the long-expected plan of the ministry. After a few remarks upon his own position, he thus feelingly dismissed that part of his subject:—

'I was called upon to make those sacrifices of private feeling, which are inseparable from apparent inconsistency of conduct—from the abandonment of preconceived opinions—from the alienation of those with whom I had heretofore co-operated. Sir, I have done so; and the events of the last six weeks must have proved, that it is painful in the extreme to prefer to such considerations, even the most urgent sense of public duty—

'Tis said with ease—but oh! how hardly tried—
By haughty souls to human honour tied—
Oh! sharp the pangs of agonizing pride!'[1]

[1] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 732.

The details of the plan were simple, and conceived (with certain exceptions) in a large and generous spirit. 'All disabilities, civil and political, were to be at once abolished—and catholics were to be made admissible to every office, whether legislative, administrative, or judicial—except that of Regent, the Chancellor of England, Chancellor of Ireland, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. ''The bill, however,' said Mr. Peel, 'will not qualify the Roman catholics to hold any office, place, or dignity connected with the church establishment of the United Kingdom, or with the ecclesiastical courts of judicature, with the universities, or the great public schools, or schools of ecclesiastical foundations. All local statutes of the universities, and the power of making such statutes will be preserved inviolate.

'The laws respecting the right of presentation to ecclesiastical benefices will remain unrepealed, and unvaried, and provision will be made for trusting exclusively to Protestant authorities the right of church patronage belonging to any civil office that may hereafter be held by a Roman catholic.

'The Roman catholics will be disabled under severe penalties from advising the Crown, directly or indirectly, in respect of the grants of church preferments; and generally, from the exercise of any influence derived from civil office over ecclesiastical appointments.'[1]

The scheme of securities was less wisely framed

[1] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 763.

than that for the removal of existing disabilities. The very principle upon which Mr. Peel declared it to be based was ill chosen. The statement of the mode in which he hoped to obtain security too plainly evinced the source of that terror which had led to his rapid, though late conversion. The language he used gave great offence, and kept alive for many years the animosity he sought to allay.

'I say at once, that we must look for real security in the regulation of the elective franchise of Ireland, in a decided, uncompromising reform of the abuses to which the exercise of the present franchise is liable. It is in vain to deny or conceal the truth in respect to that franchise. It was until a late period, the instrument through which the landed aristocracy, the resident and absentee proprietor, maintained their local influence — through which property had its weight, its legitimate weight in the national representation. *The landlord has been disarmed by the priest;* and the fear of spiritual denunciations, acting in unison with the excited passions and feelings of the multitude, has already severed in some cases, and will sever in others, unless we interfere to prevent it, every tie between the Protestant proprietor and the lower class of his Roman-catholic tenantry. The weapon which he has forged with so much care, and has heretofore wielded with such success, has broken short in his hand.'[1]

The late elections in Monaghan, Waterford, Louth,

[1] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 764.

27349

and Clare, had brought into opposition the aristocratic and ecclesiastical dominion. Both, it was now evident, could not be maintained. The latter therefore was sacrificed in the hope of retaining the former.

So long as the franchise had been a useful instrument in the hands of the landed proprietor, it was not deemed dangerous—it was not thought unjust. But when the landlord was disarmed by the priest—then great fear came upon the minds of the quick-sighted ministers of the landed aristocracy. A large majority of the poor of Ireland were Roman catholics. The chief fear that besets the minds of statesmen of the party to which Mr. Peel belonged, is lest the poor should ever attain the power of electing representatives to parliament. He saw that if he attempted at this moment merely to abolish the franchise of the forty-shilling freeholder, the question would at once be made a religious dispute, and civil commotion would be the inevitable result; but that if the abolition were combined with a measure of relief, no danger would exist; for while public attention was fixed upon the relief about to be granted, the restriction with which it was accompanied would escape severe scrutiny. Moreover the cause of the catholic gentry and the catholic poor would, by this scheme, be made no longer identical—and all really formidable opposition would be rendered impossible.

Hitherto the franchise was acquired simply by the oath of the proprietor—and was consequently *manu-*

factured to a large extent. So long as this was done by rival proprietors, and was a means employed by one rich man against another, parliament took no notice of the practice—no virtuous indignation was directed against the abuse, spite of the fraud and perjury which attended it. The making of fictitious votes was now however found to be dangerous; and precautions were taken to put an end to it. Mr. Peel thus explained the means devised:

'I propose that the lowest amount of the qualification entitling a freeholder to vote at an election for counties in Ireland, shall be ten pounds, instead of forty shillings, and that immediately after the passing of this Act, there shall be a registration of such *bonâ fide* freeholds in each county in Ireland.'[1]

The minute division of the land—the small extent of the holdings in Ireland, made this provision a sweeping extinction of nine-tenths of the voters in that country. The division of the land is undoubtedly a great evil—and therefore the political reason for division, in so far as it was efficient, was mischievous. The real and effective cause of this mischief, however, lay still deeper, and is to be found in the habits of the people, in the want of energy in the landed proprietors—in their wastefulness, idleness, and poverty. Long after all temptation to divide the land, arising from a desire to increase the number of voters, had been taken away, the evil continued. Not

[1] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 770.

until a poor-law was enacted, compelling the Irish land, and Irish property generally, to maintain the Irish poor, was any serious attempt made to limit the number of holdings, to enlarge the farms, and to convert the idle and starving peasant proprietor into an industrious and well-paid labourer. The many great problems connected with this subject have not yet been solved. We shall see the same question discussed—the same difficulties left untouched, when in the sequel the history of the Irish Reform Bill has to be related.

In addition to the securities derived from thus dealing with the franchise, was the new form of oath which the Act imposed. The declaration against the doctrine of transubstantiation was repealed altogether 'for parliament and for office generally.'—'When exclusion is to cease,' said Mr. Peel—and wisely said —'let us be spared the pain of pronouncing an opinion for mere temporal purposes in regard to the mysteries of religion, and branding as idolatrous the belief of others.' A new oath was set forth in the bill to be taken 'instead of the oaths of allegiance, abjuration, and supremacy,' which oath declares that the person taking it is a catholic,[1] that he will defend the king, his crown and dignity—and the succession as regu-

[1] The oath in the *Act* does not contain this declaration; it did as originally proposed by Mr. Peel. Being afterwards, and before the bill was printed, expunged, Lord Redesdale proposed, when the bill was in the Lords, to have this declaration inserted. The proposal was rejected.—Hansard, vol. xxi. p. 321.

lated by law—that he rejects the doctrine that kings excommunicated by the pope may be deposed or murdered—that he does not believe that the pope has civil jurisdiction within this realm — and abjures solemnly any intention to subvert the present church establishment—and swears that he will not employ any office to which he may become entitled to disturb or weaken the protestant religion or protestant government.

Such was, in fact, the substance of this celebrated proposal. Happy indeed would it have been for England, had Mr. Pitt been permitted when the union with Ireland was effected, to have done then voluntarily, what now a stern necessity compelled unwilling statesmen to perform. Years of disquiet—of misery—and of danger would have been spared to the people both of England and Ireland. The union would have become, what indeed it is not yet—something more than a union of the governments of the two countries—*viz.*, a union of the two people themselves;—and Ireland would, with her many great natural advantages, have been a happy home for the increasing millions of her people, instead of becoming what she still remains, the abode of a discontented, turbulent, thriftless, and miserable population.

One proposed measure of security, Mr. Peel alluded to in terms indeed of respect; yet as he doubted of the good that was likely to flow from it, and saw many immediate evils attendant upon its adoption, he mentioned only to reject it. This proposal was to incorporate

in some degree the Roman-catholic church with the state, as a sort of qualified establishment.

'I am not insensible to the force of those arguments which have been urged in favour of admitting the Roman-catholic church of Ireland to a qualified and subordinate establishment, by giving stipends to the Roman-catholic priesthood from the public funds. This was the measure contemplated by Mr. Pitt in 1801, and uniformly urged by Lord Castlereagh as an arrangement which ought to accompany the removal of the political disabilities of the Roman catholics. But, on the other hand, there are formidable objections to such an arrangement.'[1]

---

[1] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 775. The proposal to provide for the catholic clergy out of the funds of the state found a supporter in Mr. D. W. Harvey. This was remarkable, as Mr. Harvey stated that he owed his seat to the dissenters of Colchester. At the present moment (1849) the chief opposition to such a proposal would be raised by the dissenters of the country of every denomination. The late election for the West Riding of Yorkshire incontestibly proves the truth of this assertion. Mr. Harvey's observations on the subject are well worthy of consideration.—See Hansard, vol. xx. p. 1091. This speech was an answer to an impertinent attack made by Mr. Spring Rice. The following sarcastic observations were afterwards curiously verified:—'I cannot forget,' said Mr. Harvey, 'the time when that party [the Whigs] went over in a stream to Mr. Canning to oppose the noble Duke now at the head of the government, and the right hon. secretary opposite, upon whom they are now exhausting every term of fulsome panegyric. I believe, in my conscience, that before many months the noble Duke and the right hon. gentleman will find in the hon. member for Limerick and his friends their most formidable competitors for place.'—Ibid. idem. p. 1102.

These objections were, in Mr. Peel's opinion, first, the necessity, in order to complete and render effective any provision, of a correspondence with the pope, and the difficulties arising in the way of such a correspondence; next, the strong feeling that would be raised in the public mind by the fact of such correspondence, against the present measure of relief. This last was, in fact, the real and formidable objection. The ministers determined therefore to abstain not merely from all connexion, but any interference also—and to 'have no more to do in the way of interference with the spiritual affairs of the Romish Church, than they had to do with the internal discipline and regulations of the Wesleyan Methodists.'

When the right honourable gentleman had performed his task—after he had deliberately, and with great clearness, simplicity and earnestness, but without any admixture of passion, explained and submitted to the House the whole proposed arrangement of the administration, his thoughts at the close reverted, and with no unworthy egotism, to himself, and the motives by which he had been actuated. The tone of his observations proved how acutely he felt the sufferings of the fiery ordeal to which the indignation of his former friends had subjected him—and how his mind still lingered about the objects of his former solicitude—and with what pain he divested himself of the character of the great protestant leader.

'Perhaps I am not so sanguine as others in my expectations of the future; but I have not the slightest

hesitation in saying that I fully believe that the adjustment of this question, in the manner proposed, will give better and stronger securities to the protestant interest and the protestant establishment, than any that the present state of things admits of; and will avert evils and dangers impending and immediate. What motive, I ask, can I have for the expression of these opinions, but the honest conviction of their truth. I have watched the progress of events. I have seen day by day disunion and hatred increasing, and the prospects of peace obscured by the gloomy advance of discontent, and suspicion and distrust creeping on 'step by step,' to quote the words of Mr. Grattan, 'like the mist at the heels of the countrymen.' I well know I might have taken a more popular and more selfish course. I might have held language much more acceptable to the friends with whom I have long acted, and to the constituents whom I have lately lost. 'His ego gratiora dictu alia esse scio; sed me vera pro gratis loqui, et si meum ingenium non moneret, necessitas cogit. Vellem equidem vobis placere; sed multo malo vos salvos esse; qualecunque erga me animo futuri estis.' In the course I have taken, I have been mainly influenced by the anxious desire to provide for the maintenance of protestant interests, and for the security of protestant establishments. This is my defence—this is my consolation—this shall be my revenge.'[1]

[1] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 779. The speech in which this exposition was made, occupied, says the reporter, 'more than four

The debate which followed was unworthy of remark. It was distinguished only by the almost entire silence of the Whigs—(Mr. Brougham alone of the leading members of that party speaking on it, and he confining his observations to a few earnest and warm words of eulogy upon the measure, and the right honourable gentleman proposing it)—and by the impotent but bitter spite of the more violent spokesmen of the Tory party. Many of these had heard the stock speeches and declarations of their party so often, that at last they had convinced themselves of their truth. From their youth upwards they had listened eagerly to eloquent leaders, who had always asserted, that to grant to the catholics the power of sitting in either House of parliament, was to overthrow the protestant church establishment and protestant religion; and these eager listeners being remarkable rather for the fervour of their faith than the strength of their capacity, lived in the belief that these words were things to be religiously believed. They had been accustomed to consider their opponents as little better than infidels and revolutionists, and had listened to their arguments with a pain akin to that with which they would have heard so many really blasphemous and seditious orations. Now when they found their most esteemed chief suddenly deserting them, and using the language which, up to the pre-

---

hours in the delivery. Throughout the right hon. gentleman was listened to with the most profound attention, and at times the cheers were so loud as to be heard in Westminster Hall and the passages leading to the lobby.'

sent moment, they had been allowed, nay taught, to consider little short of very criminal impiety and treason, they were shocked, terrified, and bewildered. Gradually they gathered courage to give vent to their emotions of rage and horror. The violence of the passion, and of the language in which it was expressed, was always in an inverse ratio to the ability of the speaker. The weakest in intellect had been the firmest in faith, and were now the most violent in language, most vociferous in their indignant complaining. Mr. Bankes and Colonel Sibthorpe, on the present occasion, and throughout the succeeding debates, were particularly industrious in giving expression to the vehement passion with which they were oppressed. Sir R. H. Inglis, too, having been chosen by the University of Oxford as the most worthy representative of the true protestant fervour, thought it necessary also to be eloquent on the occasion. But he, like the other speakers against the ministerial measure, was content, for the most part, when diverging from his usual mellifluous vituperation, from soft-spoken but really unsparing and merciless anathema, to select passages from former speeches of Mr. Peel, and to repeat them as proofs of the inconsistency of the right honourable gentleman. Much time was spent in this dreary labour, by which all were wearied, except the speakers themselves.

Great pains were taken, more especially by the clergy, who fancied their interests peculiarly concerned, to excite the country by a cry, which had often before been of potent influence. The eccle-

siastical speaking-trumpet was industriously used to bellow in the ear of the ignorant the cry of 'No Popery.' The ministers were violently assailed with demands to dissolve parliament, and go to the country, upon the question of catholic emancipation; and they who never before nor since deigned to listen to the people, were now suddenly seized with an overpowering veneration for the petitions with which both Houses of parliament were at this time addressed. Sir Robert Inglis said—

'I have heard with surprise that the properest mode of ascertaining the opinion of the people was from the opinion of their representatives in that House. I allow that is one mode of ascertaining the opinion of the people; but collecting that opinion from the exercise of the right of petitioning was an equally valuable mode.'

Succeeding events must have materially modified in Sir Robert's mind this great faith in the value of popular petitions.

Throughout Ireland an immense majority of the people were in favour of concession. In England the terror of the papists was confined chiefly to the clerical body and those in immediate subjection to them, and the very ignorant peasantry. The instructed of all classes were almost unanimous in their support of the ministerial measure. The people generally, however, looked on the matter with something like apathy—their leaning being rather against than in favour of the catholic cause. In Scotland, indeed, the old hatred of popery was found still to

exist; and in Glasgow mobs were raised, equalling in ferocity and ignorance the wretched followers of Lord George Gordon, in London, during the riots of 1780. But in these our days the teaching of experience is rapid. To find a 'No Popery' mob in the city of Glasgow at the present time (1849) ready to beat or ill-treat a man because he proposed to sign a petition in favour of religious liberty, would be utterly impossible.[1] In the year 1829 such disgraceful scenes were witnessed, and were, by Mr. Brougham, in the House of Commons, indignantly described and reprobated.[2] Both parties in the House of Commons asserted that a majority of the people favoured their views, and they both appealed to the various petitions addressed to the House in proof of their assertions. The Tories, however, who loudly demanded a dissolution of the parliament, seemed the more really confident of the two. The ministers, nevertheless, would have acted unwisely by acceding to these demands, even if they had been certain of obtaining a majority in a new House of Commons. A religious excitement amongst a whole people is always of itself a great national calamity. When this excitement leads to a religious feud, dividing the people into hostile parties, bitterly exasperated against one another, it deserves to be ranked amongst the most terrible evils which can

[1] I am bound to say, that late events have somewhat shaken my opinion as to the extent of liberality in religious matters to which my countrymen have attained (1851).

[2] Hansard, vol. xx. p. 818.

befal a nation. To ward off such a mischief by all honest means, is the duty of every honest statesman; and none but a fool or a villain would run the risk gratuitously of incurring it. Had the Duke of Wellington yielded to the demand for a dissolution, the whole kingdom would have been thrown into a state of confusion for no purpose. All rational men saw that a further denial of the catholic claims and continuance of peace was impossible; and every one, not blinded by bigotry, felt that no mischief could follow from emancipation, supposing any possible, which would bear comparison with the calamities attendant even upon one day of civil war.[1] If the ministry had in the new House of Commons obtained a majority, they would simply have retained the advantage which they already possessed, after having allowed the nation to incur the expense and annoyance, not to say danger, of an election under such circumstances. But if, as was indeed not improbable, that a no-popery majority had been obtained, the mischief would have been increased tenfold. Every political man of any ability had now declared in

[1] Hansard, vol. xxi. p. 45. 'My lords,' said the Duke of Wellington, 'I am one of those who have probably passed a longer period of my life engaged in war than most men, and principally, I may say, in civil war; and I must say this, that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice whatever, even one month of civil war in the country to which I am attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it.' This feeling led him to propose concession, and to resist every artifice employed to defeat or delay his plan.

favour of concession, so that the formation of a no-popery ministry would have been impossible. The very House of Commons, elected under the influence of an anti-popish excitement, would, after some experience, have discovered the inevitable necessity of yielding upon this question—the final result being, after a protracted and mischievous struggle, the proposal and enactment of the very measure now submitted to the legislature. The probable influence of a re-election on the composition and opinions of the House of Commons, could not be easily predicted. The effect of such a proceeding, at such a time, upon the quiet and harmony of the nation, could, without any difficulty or doubt, be at once ascertained. The conduct of the various parties who opposed the ministerial proposal, considering the age in which we live, seems absolutely incredible. That such conduct had a serious effect for the moment upon the opinions of any portion of the people, seems, if such a thing be possible, yet more improbable. Such, nevertheless, was the fact. Sermons were preached from hundreds of pulpits, detailing with a horrible minuteness the cruelties and tyranny which in past ages had been practised by papists. Tracts were circulated all over the kingdom, detailing all sorts of atrocities perpetrated by the Roman catholics upon our protestant forefathers, which atrocities these prophets of evil asserted would again be exercised over defenceless protestants, if once the catholics were allowed to have seats in either House of parliament. Rude prints of furious priests,

with the cross in one hand and a torch in the other, standing over wretches about to be submitted to the scourge and consigned to the flames, were with a merciless industry circulated among the cottages of the poor in all parts of the realm. Anxiety and a blind terror were ruthlessly excited, in the hope that fury would follow fear, and that threats of violence—nay, violence itself—would come in the train of this ignorance and passion. Both Houses of parliament were for many weeks employed in receiving and talking about petitions from all parts of the country, for and against the ministerial measure. From these discussions a very vivid conception can be obtained of the various artifices employed to excite the people, and the degree and quality of the excitement created among the different classes of the nation. The very poor and the very ignorant were alone found susceptible of real terror; and to these, consequently, the fanatical members of the clergy of the church of England addressed themselves, stooping to the vilest arts in order to alarm and excite them. On the other hand, the more enlightened classes, and the more instructed of each class, were always most in favour of concession, and most earnest in support of it; because they believed it absolutely necessary for the peace, and thereby for the happiness of the whole community. Wherever a direct selfish interest did not interfere with their judgment, the instructed classes of the people almost unanimously prayed for the immediate enactment of the ministerial plan.

Any one who will conscientiously perform the wearisome task of wading through the discussions upon petitions during this session (and the time of parliament was almost wholly occupied in them), will acknowledge that the conclusion here stated, as to their general character, is perfectly correct. He will be the first to confess that catholic emancipation was carried by the intelligent few against the ignorant and excited many. This, though an apparent, is no valid argument against an extended suffrage. We should judge of the worth or propriety of an institution, not from a single isolated instance of its working, but from the many instances which constitute a general result or tendency. That influence of the instructed classes which exercised so great a sway over a House of Commons elected by a narrow constituency, would be omnipotent over an assembly chosen by the whole people.

The relief bill, and that for the regulation of the franchise, were both read a third time in the House of Commons on the 30th of March, passed, and sent to the Lords.[1] The Duke of Wellington, on the 31st, moved the first reading of the relief bill in the Upper House.

The long debates which followed offered nothing of novelty. The Duke of Wellington on the second reading, briefly but forcibly stated the circumstances

[1] The numbers were—ayes, 320; noes, 142—majority, 178.—Hansard, vol. xx. p. 1633.

which had compelled his unwilling assent to the measure. The organization of the whole catholic population, under the Catholic Association, had transferred the government of the country in reality to that body. Denial of the catholic demands, if continued, was certain to bring about commotion, which the Duke, who knew well what war was, said would be civil war. Rebellion might, he confessed, be put down; but the mischiefs resulting from it could not be arrested—neither could the conduct which the Association threatened to pursue be prevented. A system of non-intercourse with the protestants throughout Ireland was contemplated by them; which system he said, was already driving out of the country all such protestants as could escape. Thus those very exclusive privileges which were to be retained for the benefit of protestants and protestantism, were working the utter annihilation of the whole protestant population. Having to choose between concession and those certain evils resulting from resistance, he did not hesitate, spite of his former and often expressed opinions, to adopt the former. Having come to this conclusion, he also resolved at once to act upon it. Mischief alone could result from delay.

To these statements no rational objection was adduced. Long speeches were made indeed, but nothing new was said, and the oft-repeated lamentations over this inroad upon the constitution were no answer to the Duke of Wellington's question:—'What, in the circumstances I have described, do you say

ought to be done?' The description he gave of the actual condition of Ireland, no one presumed to gainsay. The good sense of the Lords told them, that the only safe, or rational, or humane course of conduct was that which the ministers recommended. The Archbishop of Canterbury, seconded by the Archbishop of Armagh, moved in vain to throw out the bill. After a debate of three days, the second reading was carried by an overwhelming majority, and the bill shortly after became, together with the bill altering the franchise, the law of the land.

The remaining incidents of the session served to diminish the popularity of the administration, and to disappoint the flattering expectations of those who hoped for peace in Ireland as a consequence of the act just passed in favour of the catholics.

The agitation by which the excitement of the people had been maintained, was carried on by a regularly organized body of professional agitators. Agitation was their business, the source from whence they derived their means of subsistence. They therefore must have viewed as a calamity the measure which was passed for the purpose of putting an end to the grievance of which they complained. The grievance and their livelihood were destroyed together. They were therefore glad of any excuse for the continuance of their trade. The disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders was one pretext for complaining—the issuing a new writ for Clare on Mr. O'Connell's refusal to take the oath of supremacy was another.

They seized upon both events, as proofs of the hostility of England, and of the necessity of having again an Irish parliament for the government of Ireland. The demand for the repeal of the Union was now therefore substituted by these professional agitators, at the head of whom stood Mr. O'Connell himself, for that of catholic emancipation;—and this new cry was so far superior to the old one, that no person could hope to see it put an end to by concession. The two measures thus converted into grievances were great mistakes on the part of the administration. The power of the aristocracy was in no way increased by the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders—and Mr. O'Connell was made yet more powerful for mischief by the refusal to admit him as member for the county which had so enthusiastically returned him.[1]

To judge of the effects of any institution by what occurred during a time of temporary frenzy, was of necessity to fall into a grave error. The enthusiasm which led to the Clare election would soon have died away, and all the old influences have resumed their dominion. The power of the landlord in the business of

[1] Lord Cloncurry states his belief that Mr. O'Connell would have settled down into a useful and really patriotic Irish member, if the ministry had not insulted him by this proceeding.—See LORD CLONCURRY'S *Recollections*, p. 400. But the evil lay deeper. The government ought not only to have avoided insulting, but to have *provided* for Mr. O'Connell. *Agitation* meant *income*.

every-day life would quickly have overpowered the new-born influence of the priests. Wealth would have been too powerful for superstition. Offence was given, and no additional power was gained, even supposing such additional power necessary for the peace of the country.

Mr. O'Connell's case, with respect to his election for the county of Clare, was a peculiar one. It could never have been converted into a precedent—no mischief then could arise from it by way of example. To exclude him from parliament was now no longer possible. If the law, by the peculiar circumstances of his case, were doubtful, policy required that he should have the benefit of the doubt, and thus additional grace would have been given to the great concession just made in favour of his sect. No one, who now dispassionately views the legal point in the case, can assert that it is without doubt. The argument of Mr. O'Connell remained in many parts unanswered—and the result of the discussion was, that in the world's opinion, he was excluded from personal pique—not because the law was against him; —that he was sacrificed to party resentment, which wreaked its vengeance on him in spite of, and not in accordance with, the law.

The facts of the case may be briefly stated. A vacancy occurred in the representation of the county of Clare; the writ for a new election was issued; the election took place, and the return was made, before the alteration of the law which changed the form of the oaths required of a member of parliament. A

petition was presented against Mr. O'Connell's return; a committee to try the merits of that petition was appointed under the Grenville Act, and unanimously declared Mr. O'Connell duly returned. In the meantime, the law respecting the oaths was changed, and Lord Surrey, a catholic, took his seat, having previously taken the new oath prescribed by the new act. But Lord Surrey had been elected and returned *since* the passing of this act.

Mr. O'Connell being, according to form, introduced by Lord Ebrington and Lord Duncannon, came to the table to take the oaths. He demanded to have the new oath administered, but as he had been elected and returned before the passing of the late act, the old oaths were proposed. These he refused to take, and claimed to be heard in support of the course he wished to pursue. A discussion arose as to the form of the proceeding—viz., whether he should be heard at the table or the bar of the House, all agreeing that heard he must be, before the House decided; the only doubt that arose was, as to the place from which he was to speak. Mr. Brougham, on behalf of Mr. O'Connell, very wisely waived all discussion on this point. The House decided that he should be heard, and that he should speak from the bar and not the table. The discussion on so trivial a question was itself an error—a mistake in policy; for trivial the question was, spite of all the solemn asseverations of Mr. Wynn and others, who delighted to make a mysterious science of parliamentary forms.

An objection raised upon an idle question of mere form, showed the spirit and temper of the House itself to be hostile to Mr. O'Connell, and the ultimate decision was divined before the discussion began.

Mr. O'Connell's manner took the House by surprise. They knew of him only as the fierce demagogue and agitator, a mob-orator, unscrupulous in assertion, reckless and wild in manner; as of one ready to sacrifice all considerations of decorum and truth to the one object of creating and maintaining the mad excitement of his countrymen. But he who was now before them compelled from his bitterest opponents reluctant applause; his whole demeanour was a happy mixture of dignity, respect, and ease. He spoke of himself without affectation or bravado,—of the House with all due consideration, keeping his temper under perfect control, and giving none the slightest advantage by any violence, or asperity, either of manner or of language. He proved himself, moreover, by such knowledge of the law as the question needed, fully equal to the duty which his position cast on him, and by his masterly exposition of his argument worthy to cope with any adversary the House could furnish. The Solicitor-General, Sir Nicolas Tindall spoke of him as 'having stated his claim with the ability which might have been expected from so distinguished a member of his profession, and with a temper which did equal credit to his feelings as a man and a gentleman.'[1] Mr.

[1] Hansard, vol. xxi. p. 1414.

Doherty, the Solicitor-General for Ireland, declared that the 'talent with which the learned gentleman had advocated his cause at the bar of the House, was of itself a sufficient proof how worthy, he was to possess a seat in parliament.'[1] Mr. Brougham willingly concurred in bearing testimony to the temper and deliberate tone in which the discussion of that evening had been conducted. Sir James Scarlett and Mr. Sugden were profuse of words expressing eulogy and respect—and the House universally assented to the praise thus given. Public sympathy was roused in his favour, and condemned the exclusion which soon after followed, as an exhibition of unworthy, impolitic spite. Mr. O'Connell deeming that this personal insult, and the disfranchisement of his friends the forty-shilling voters, cancelled his whole debt of gratitude, continued with unabated zeal and industry his opposition to the administration.

The Whigs also were soon found acting as adversaries of the ministry, who for some months had received their approval and support. During the protracted debates upon the relief measure, the attention of the public was so fixed on that one object, that none could be induced to think of aught else. There remained now but a few weeks before the close of the session—during which brief period no regular plan of opposition could be developed—no systematic attack even commenced. The practical

[1] Hansard, vol. xxi. p. 1447.

sagacity of the Whigs, however, quickly discovered the points upon which the attack must eventually be made, and they soon gave symptoms of their hostile intentions.

The question of catholic emancipation had always, by those who well understood the character of the English people, been deemed the surest, nay, the almost impregnable rampart by which the existing constitution of the House of Commons was defended. At first sight, there seems no connexion between these two matters, of catholic emancipation and reform in parliament. That there was a connexion, nevertheless, the sequel showed, proving those to have been sagacious politicians who always looked upon the catholic grievances as the chief bulwark of the unreformed parliament. It was so, because public attention in England is never efficiently directed to more than one subject at a time. The habit of the people is to take one thing in hand, occupy themselves about it till finished, and then, but not till then, proceed to another. Now the catholic disabilities, though unpopular with and opposed by a large majority, of the people of Ireland were not so in England. The grievance, however, was to those affected by it intensely galling and irritating. Every catholic felt personally insulted by the mere existence of the law, and would pay but little attention to any subject of political import so long as it remained unrepealed. The state of Ireland, a state always of disquiet and misery, was ever a subject of anxiety to the govern-

ment, and afforded to every opposition a favourable subject for declamatory attacks. But when Ireland was the theme, the catholic disabilities were the chief subject of discourse, and the hostile opinions of statesmen on this unfortunate matter were the constant topic of consideration, anxiety, and altercation. They who were opposed to reform in parliament were glad to have the catholic claims as the grand subject of debate, because on that they were, as they fancied, and indeed as the fact was, sure to have a majority in England with them; whereas, if reform in parliament should by any unhappy accident become the one paramount topic, their victory might not be so certain. When the catholic claims and grievances were almost by accident removed from the field of dispute, parliamentary reform began to be thought of and talked about, many circumstances contributing to make it a prominent subject of consideration. The majority of the very wealthy in England being usually faithfully represented by the House of Commons, had hitherto been opposed to any change in the system of election. When these persons, constituting the leaders of the great Tory party, found their opinions suddenly disregarded on the question which they had been taught to consider the most important in the whole range of politics, they began to think that a system which could bring about such a result, was not entirely faultless, and might require amendment. They also dreaded the consequences of the change in the law respecting catholics upon the representation

of the country, and declared that 'the whole internal constitution of the House had been revolutionized,' and 'that the country expected some statutory provision for the safety of its interests, more especially the interests of the protestant community against the influx and increase of the Roman-catholic party.'[1] When the decision of the House on the catholic question had thus alarmed the heads of the Tory party, and made them look with some complacency upon reform, the determinations come to respecting East Retford by the Commons, and of Penryn by the Lords, convinced the moderate reformers that any improvement, no matter how minute or how necessary, was utterly hopeless. Hitherto partial measures had been from time to time proposed—generally plans for conferring upon the populous districts of the north, which in ancient times, when our system grew up, were insignificant villages, the privilege of being represented. The cases of East Retford and Penryn were considered by the so-called moderate reformers to afford excellent opportunities for this small reform. These places had dwindled to comparative obscurity, they had been proved corrupt, and the proposal to transfer the right of electing members from these

[1] See Marquis of Blandford's speech on Parliamentary Reform, June 2, 1829.—Hansard, vol. xxi. p. 1672, *et seq.* I do not quote Lord Blandford as himself an authority; but his sentiments were loudly cheered by the Tory party, and were evidently shared by them; so that it was clear his words expressed their opinions.

insignificant and corrupt communities, to those now populous, rich, important, but unrepresented districts of the north, was considered a happy compromise, by which a more searching and dangerous change might be fortunately evaded. The Lords, at the outset, and the Commons also eventually, refused to adopt this proposal. In the case of Penryn, a bill passed the Commons for the disfranchisement of that borough, and for giving to Manchester the right of sending two members to parliament. The House of Lords, without a division, threw out this bill.[1] The enemies of reform in the House of Commons upon this resolved not to disfranchise East Retford, and give the right of electing members to a populous town; but as they had acknowledged the corruption of the borough, and could not recede from this admission, they, to preserve appearances, determined to extend the right of voting to the surrounding hundred. Angry discussions occurred, and the attention of the country was occupied with this most insignificant proceeding—insignificant in itself, important as the result proved, from the effect produced on the public mind by the determined obstinacy of the House in resisting all reform. Before anything could be decided, however, parliament was prorogued; no writ was issued either for Penryn or East Retford.

The opponents of these small attempts had the best

[1] Hansard, vol. xix. p. 1450.

of the argument. They openly avowed, that what was the proved case of these two boroughs, was in reality the case of all. They denounced as hypocrisy that pretended horror of corruption which members evinced, and roundly asserted, that notoriously every seat was a subject of traffic, and that a borough sending members to parliament was a regular marketable commodity,—that the voters of Penryn and East Retford who for a few shillings sold their votes, did no more than the proprietors of close boroughs did every day:—and Lord Howick in plain terms appealed to Mr. Peel, the member for Westbury, and asked whether his seat had not been regularly purchased of Sir Manasseh Lopez, the proprietor and former representative of that borough. No reply was made to this question—all well knew that the noble lord's assertion was true, and that denial was impossible. The opponents of the proposed change however not only declared that seats were thus regularly bought and sold, but they went further and defended the system, asserting that by this rather curious process, a very accurate representation of the whole people was congregated in the House of Commons. And they appealed to the various instances of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning, Mr. Brougham, and many others, to show that the ability as well as the wealth and the feelings of the country found representatives in that House. These discussions, and the avowals made, attracted attention to, and rivetted it upon parliamentary reform, which was evidently destined to be, together with the con-

dition of the industrious classes, the grand topic of the coming session. The notice-book of the House of Commons consequently contained many notices of motion, propounding various schemes for a reform in the popular representation, and for relieving the burthens of the people. Thus closed the important session of 1829.

CHAPTER IV.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE SESSION 1830, EXTENDING TO JUNE.

FINANCIAL MEASURES.

THE peculiar relation of political parties to each other was seen so soon as parliament met at the commencement of 1830, a year that will be for ever memorable in the annals of mankind, as the commencement of that great era of change in the midst of which we now live.

Although the Duke of Wellington had carried the Catholic Relief Bill by the assistance of the Whigs, he evinced a fixed determination to resist *all* proposals of alliance with that party. He looked wistfully to his former friends—but they were no longer friendly or confiding. Though many of them had, under the influence of his authority, voted in support of his proposal, they had done so with pain, and resented as an injury the alternative to which they had been subjected, of either opposing the great chief of their party, or deserting their party principles. Under the fear of commotion in Ireland, they had consented to concession—strangely yielding to an authority, and at the same moment quarrelling with him who had

exercised it.[1] They had not courage to say, 'We think your prophecy of danger utterly false, and are prepared to abide by the present state of things,' and all its consequences; and therefore we shall, resist the passing of your proposed measure.' But they now said, 'You have destroyed the constitution upon a vain pretext: we have obeyed you, in this, the most important measure which you can propose, but we renounce your guidance and friendship henceforth.' The Duke of Wellington, however, apparently hoping that this ill-feeling would wear off, made no advances to the opposition; neither did he receive with favour those which they made to him. They, indeed, professed very friendly feelings towards the administration, and gave many indications of a willingness to unite with the Duke of Wellington, as they had only a few months since with Mr. Canning; but while they gave these signs of their wish for an alliance, they did not commit themselves so far as to neglect the popular part, which in opposition it is their destiny to perform.

The personal antipathy of the king to Mr. Brougham was given as a reason, by the friends of the administration,[2] for their not joining the Whigs. When Mr.

---

[1] A precisely similar occurrence we have beheld in our own times, in the instance of Sir Robert Peel, when proposing a repeal of the Corn Law.

[2] This reason is, indeed, inconsistent with the statement, that Mr. Canning and the Duke of Wellington both offered high judicial appointments to Mr. Brougham. Neither is the story of the

Canning was in difficulty, the same obstacle existed; but Mr. Brougham on that occasion waived his claims upon the consideration of his party, declaring that he would prove no hindrance to the proposed alliance between his friends and Mr. Canning. The king extolled, what he was pleased to call the magnanimity of this conduct of Mr. Brougham, but never attempted to vie with it; still retaining his personal dislike. And now again Mr. Brougham was said to be a stumbling-block in the way of a coalition.[1] This obstacle was, however, not considered insuperable; and the opposition, believing that it might be overcome, or removed, were unwilling to force the Duke into a final

---

offer of the Rolls by the Duke easily to be reconciled with one which will be hereafter adverted to, respecting the refusal of that office by King William IV. to Mr. Brougham. As these stories are current, and as, whether true or false, they curiously illustrate the intrigues of the times, I have deemed it right to speak of them. That *some* change had taken place in the mind of George IV. respecting Mr. Brougham, was proved by his allowing Mr. Canning, through Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, to confer a silk gown on Mr. Brougham, to whom the king had pertinaciously refused for many years this distinction.—See *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 2.

[1] The various intrigues, the reports concerning them, and the contradictory stories related by the parties interested, puzzle and confound an honest narrator. How, for example, are we to reconcile this account of the antipathy of George IV. to Mr. Brougham — of the barren laudation of his forbearance and generosity, with the supposed offer, by Mr. Canning, of the high judicial office of Chief Baron, holding out, at the same time, the great seal in expectancy, to Mr. Brougham, in 1827? Was it George the Fourth's conscience of which Mr. Canning thought Mr. Brougham might be the keeper?

rupture, by taking at first a course of violent opposition. When the king gave symptoms of great decay, and men perceived that his end approached, the tactics of the opposition changed; they then began to evince their determination to compel the administration to relinquish office, or accept their alliance. The change from the cordial support given by the opposition during the passing of the Relief Bill, to the marked hostility of the closing scenes of the session of 1830, was gradual, however, and for a time was regulated by the state of the king's health;—as that grew worse the opposition became more hostile;—when his death appeared inevitable, and the Duke still continued averse to an open alliance, all symptoms of friendship disappeared.

The parliament was opened on the 4th of February by commission, and the address in answer to the king's speech was in both Houses met by an amendment. The topic of complaint was the distress of the country. One paragraph of the speech from the throne contained these words:—

'His Majesty laments, that notwithstanding this indication of active commerce, distress should prevail among the agricultural and manufacturing classes *in some parts* of the United Kingdom.'

Thereupon those of the Tory party who were sufficiently angry openly to express their passion, became a part of the opposition, and assumed the language usually adopted by politicians when out of office. They were suddenly moved by a great sympathy with

the distress of the people, and were indignant at the slighting manner in which it was spoken of by the ministers in the king's speech. Lord Stanhope in the Lords moved as an amendment upon the address, which merely echoed the speech, and spoke of the distress in *some* parts of the kingdom, the following words:—

'That this House views with the deepest sorrow and anxiety, the severe distress which now afflicts the country, and will immediately proceed to examine into its cause, and into the means of effectually providing the necessary relief.'

Lord Stanhope was a vehement opponent of all the changes which had of late years been introduced into our commercial system, and was one of those who delighted in abusing what they termed free trade. By this amendment he meant to assert that the misery which was prevalent resulted entirely from the unwise proceedings of parliament, with regard both to the currency and taxation. The debate was important only as an indication of the state of parties. The topic chosen as the pretext for finding fault, was that which they who selected it thought most likely to be popular; and the arguments which were employed, should be considered simply as evidences of the commonplaces of political railing at that period. The change to cash payments, the relaxation of restrictions upon the importation of foreign produce, the popular discontent, and growing contempt for the authority of parliament, formed the subject matter of

the speeches of the peers who proposed and supported the amendment; their number, however, was not great, being only nine—including the most violent high-church, anti-catholic party, on the one hand, and Lord Radnor, who went further as a reformer than the Whigs generally, on the other. Lord Lansdowne spoke the sentiments of that party, and evinced that sort of balancing in language, which was natural in those who were anxiously watching the events of the time, and uncertain of the course which their interests might eventually require them to pursue.

He opposed the amendment, because its object was clearly to substitute an unlimited paper currency for the present metallic standard. But having said this much against the amendment, he next proceeded to give a reason for being very much inclined to support it. That great distress existed, none could doubt; and herein he agreed with the amendment. But nevertheless, he considered that all proceedings connected with an inquiry into the causes of that distress should be conducted with the utmost, and most cautious attention; and upon this unmeaning statement he rested his determination to oppose the amendment.

Party spirit in the House of Commons, however, was more openly evinced. The medley was remarkable, in appearance, though the desires that governed the conduct of the separate sections of the House could not for an instant be mistaken.

The address was proposed by Lord Darlington, the eldest son of the Marquis of Cleveland, hitherto a great

leading potentate of the Whig party. The amendment was moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull, an angry high Tory leader; and supported by Mr. Huskisson and his friends, the disappointed and personal opponents of the Duke of Wellington.

Mr. Brougham, who now, in debate at least, led the Whigs in the Commons,[1] though not formally their chief, gave reasons for reluctantly supporting the amendment. He did so, he said, because the amendment was nearer the truth than the original address —still he declared his was no hostile vote—for, if he believed that his vote would overturn the administration, he would not have given it. 'Imperfect as was the original address, he would prefer lending it his support in such an alternative.' In words the amendment differed from that moved by Lord Stanhope, though it touched upon the same topic of complaint. 'We lament,' it said, 'the existence of that distress

[1] Mr. Brougham had hitherto sat as member for Winchelsea, a borough subject to the influence of the Marquis of Cleveland, by whom Mr. Brougham, indeed, was returned. His vote on the present occasion placed him in disagreeable opposition to his parliamentary patron, as Lord Darlington had moved the address, and the Marquis of Cleveland himself was understood to have formally given his influence to the government. Mr. Tierney's sudden death relieved Mr. Brougham from his difficulty. The borough of Knaresbro', belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, became vacant, and Mr. Brougham, vacating Winchelsea, was returned by the Duke of Devonshire for Knaresbro'. Mr. Williams succeeded his old friend Mr. Brougham, as member for Winchelsea. These changes were important only as indications of the fluctuations of party politics.

which your Majesty informs us is confined to some places; but in the painful discharge of our duty, we are constrained to declare to your Majesty that that distress is not confined to some places, as your Majesty has been advised, but is general among all the productive interests of the country, which are severely suffering from its pressure. We beg to assure your Majesty that we shall adopt the caution which your Majesty recommends in the consideration of the measures to be adopted in reference to those interests, and that our endeavours shall be employed to alleviate and remove the distress now so unfortunately existing.'

The only object of such an amendment, was to express hostility. It advanced no principle—it pledged the House to no particular line of conduct, it threw no blame on any one as the cause of the general misery which it said existed. It declared, however, in parliamentary phrase, that they who moved, and they who supported it, were hostile to the administration. Mr. Brougham's saving declaration, therefore, was understood only to signify that he and his party were not irrevocably pledged to hostility—but that they intended soon, if not prevented by overtures of alliance, frankly to resume their old position of open opponents: that they were ready to make part of the present administration, and would prefer that course to overturning it, in order to construct a new one; but that they would even take this last step rather than submit to permanent exclusion. That this was the real meaning

of the language employed, became every day more evident; though no very direct hostility was evinced at the moment; for while Mr. Brougham and a few of the more distinguished Whigs supported the amendment, the great body of that party gave their votes to the administration. The amendment was in consequence negatived. The numbers being 158 to 105 in favour of the original address.[1] A scene of yet greater significance occurred on the following day upon bringing up the report, when the Marquis of Blandford moved a long amendment, which asserted that an awful and alarming distress prevailed throughout all the great interests of the country, and that the House was at no

---

[1] That this majority was the result of an intrigue, the world very generally believed; and to this suspicion the organ of the Tory party afterwards gave a voice. 'The first symptom of the danger of the government from this formidable combination of Whigs, Radicals, Liberals, and Ultras, was in the address, in Feb. 1830, when Sir E. Knatchbull, one of the leaders of the Ultras, proposed an amendment, in which the majority of the Whigs concurred, and which would have closed the Duke of Wellington's administration *on that night*, but that a few Whigs, and most of the Radicals (by, as it was surmised, the *friendly advice* of one of the Whig leaders, who thought the fruit not yet ripe), professing to dislike the quarter from which the amendment came, voted with the government.'— *Quarterly Review*, No. XC. p. 529. Lord Howick was the person here alluded to; but there is reason for believing that Lord Howick and certain of his party were more influenced by a desire to prove that Mr. Brougham was not their leader, than by any nice distinction of party interests. The breach which occurred in 1827, between Lord Grey and Mr. Brougham, was not yet repaired; as between Lord Howick and Mr. Brougham it never was repaired.

loss to 'indicate the real cause of this most unnatural state of things.' That cause, he asserted, was the peculiar and corrupt system of the representation—and the only remedy for the evil, was 'restoring the people to their rightful share in the legislation of the country.' To this amendment the Whigs gave no direct support. Those of the party who spoke respecting it, expressed approbation of its spirit, but questioned the propriety of propounding the doctrines it contained at this particular moment. Sir Francis Burdett, who during his whole life had kept himself separate from the Whigs as a party, and had always called himself a Radical reformer, took advantage of his apparently independent position, to press upon the administration a sense of their own inefficiency, and thereby to make them alive to the necessity of an alliance with the Whigs—giving them plainly to understand that alliance or hostility was now the only *alternative*. And in order to prove that, in his opinion, the day of hesitation or compromise on this question had gone past, he thus spoke of the Duke of Wellington as chief of that administration. At the time this language was employed, it excited attention, because of the peculiar position of the political parties to which it related. We may now regard it in another light. The subsequent career of the speaker suggests no very favourable comment upon his candour and consistency. 'When I find,' he said, 'the prime minister of England so shamefully insensible to sufferings and distress which are painfully apparent through-

out the land—when, instead of meeting such an overwhelming pressure of calamity with some measure of relief, or some attempt at relief, he seeks to stifle every important inquiry—when he calls that a partial and temporary evil which is both long lived and universal, I cannot look on such a mournful crisis in which public misfortune is insulted by ministerial apathy, without hailing any prospect of change in the system which has produced it. What shall we say to the ignorance which can attribute our distresses to the introduction of machinery and the application of steam, that noble improvement in the inventions of man, to which men of science and intelligence mainly ascribe our prosperity? I feel a high and an unfeigned respect for that illustrious person's abilities in the field; but I cannot help thinking that he did himself no less than justice, when he said a few months before he accepted his present office, that he should be a fit inmate for an asylum of a peculiar nature, if he ever were induced to take such a burthen on his shoulders. In fact, both myself and very many honourable members about me, have long treated this illustrious individual with much tenderness, because we have felt that he has conferred the greatest benefits on his country. He is the only man who could have accomplished what he has done, and be his praise in proportion. But let it at the same time be remembered, that if his service was great, his recompence has been commensurate. We have repaid him abundantly in returns of confidence and approbation. The time, however,

is come when it will be necessary to do much more.'[1]

The various sections of the opposition united in demanding a reduction of the expenditure—and the more ardent and more liberal became urgent for a reform in the system of parliamentary representation. These two subjects, in fact, were made the grand topics of debate during the session, and were industriously employed as instruments for assaulting the administration in both Houses of parliament. Economy and parliamentary reform were popular with the country; and the high Tory, as well as Whig party, eagerly chimed in with the public opinion, when by so doing they were able to gratify their hostility and their ambition.

A sense of decorum, however, and a lurking terror of the danger attendant on appeals to the popular feeling, restrained and materially checked both the ebullition of spleen and the aspirations of ambition among the members of the House of Lords. Lord Stanhope, indeed, on the 25th of February, in moving for a committee of the whole House on the state of the nation, was profuse in his professions of sympathy with the sufferings of the people—he bemoaned the distresses of all the industrious, but more especially of the agricultural classes,—and insisted 'that it was the bounden duty of their lordships to endeavour to ascertain what the real causes of this distress were, in

[1] Hansard, *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 67.

order that they might be enabled to judge how far it was possible to apply a remedy to it.' 'It is,' said the noble lord, 'your lordships' duty to institute an inquiry into the causes of the distress with which the people of this country are afflicted, and which causes have not been in any manner explained by the speech from the throne. Such an inquiry is called for in order to satisfy the people of England. And this I will tell your lordships, that the people of this country will not, and they ought not to remain patient under such intolerable sufferings as they now experience, if no inquiry shall take place, and if no attempt shall be made to grant them relief.' But while the noble lord indulged in this wild declamation, he carefully avoided incurring any obligation himself by a proposal of remedies. 'It is necessary,' he exclaimed, 'for your lordships to enter upon the inquiry I propose, in order to ascertain what remedies are applicable to the present appalling state of things. As to the nature of those remedies, I shall abstain from giving an opinion at present.'[1] The noble lord, however, did not hesitate to express his opinion as to the actual condition of the people, and the danger that would attend a disregard and neglect of that condition by the House of Lords.

'The country is rapidly advancing—owing to the existing general depression—to a state of national bankruptcy. We are rapidly advancing, my lords, to

[1] See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 391.

a general disorganization, which will end, and at no distant period, in the total dissolution of the body politic.' The Duke of Richmond and Lord Eldon both asserted that this was an accurate description of the actual state of the nation, and Lord Eldon was lavish in his expressions of admiration and gratitude, when descanting on the exemplary patience of the people under their sufferings—'a patience,' added the noble lord, with characteristic piety, though with a somewhat equivocal intent—'a patience which I hope and trust in God they will continue to manifest, notwithstanding the earnest endeavours of certain persons to goad them into undutifulness.'[1] The language of the Whigs was not at this time of so hostile a description; —and hitherto they were carefully guarded in all their expressions of blame. They professed to have confidence in the intentions of the noble Duke at the head of the administration, and when forced by duty, as they said, to differ from him or his colleagues, they always accompanied their dissent with expressions of regret, and avowals of a desire to maintain the existence of the present government. The Tory party, on the contrary, were already openly hostile,[2] having

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 401.

[2] 'The Liberal seceders soon grew into secret but close union with the Whigs; the Ultras, without, we believe, any secret understanding, were willing to unite with the Whig, Liberal, or Radical, in *any* measure of hostility to the administration; and this line of conduct they pursued with a degree of acrimony which no bystander could have foreseen, and with a fatal and

renounced the friendship which the Whigs still hoped to acquire. On this occasion, therefore, Lord Lansdowne, as representing and leading the Whig party in the House of Lords, opposed the motion of Lord Stanhope. A month, however, had scarcely passed before a change occurred in the expectations of the Whig party, and consequently in their language and their votes. On the 18th of March, the Duke of Richmond moved not indeed for a committee of the whole House, but for a select committee on the state of the nation. The Duke of Wellington on this occasion, as on the former one of Lord Stanhope's motion, stated that he looked upon the proposal as a declaration of direct hostility to the government. 'When I find,' said the noble Duke, with his characteristic plain sense, and straightforward phrase—'when I find a motion thus proposed, and thus supported—when I find that the words of it may be made to include everything—I conclude that there is some ulterior party object in view, directed against the existing government, which object it is my duty to entreat your lordships to resist.'[1] Lord Lansdowne on this occasion supported the motion—thus significantly evincing the change that had taken place in the expectations of his party.

---

suicidal success, of which they themselves have been the first victims, and for which, as all the world knows, they are now, on public grounds, among the sincerest mourners.' Such was the language of the *Quarterly Review*, *after* the event. See No. XC. p. 529.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 855.

The language employed by members of the House of Commons was less restrained by conventional rules, and the resentment of the Tory party and the desires of the Whigs were there more openly avowed than in the House of Peers. The objects sought by the various party sections which constituted the opposition were very different, though the arguments which they all used were at times identical—and their votes not seldom in unison. The objects sought to be attained by the Tory party remained the same from the beginning to the end of the session—it was to damage and overturn the administration of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. The object also of that very small section of members who might be considered to be fairly represented by Mr. Hume, remained in the same way unchanged during the same period—a change in the system of parliamentary representation, and a material reduction of expense, being the end for which they sincerely laboured. The Whigs, however, believed that office was within their reach, and they shaped their conduct so as to make it subservient to attaining that one great object of all their desires.

They, in furtherance of this end, began the session with great professions of sympathy with the suffering people, and many separate proposals of retrenchment and reform. Mr. Hume and the few independent members who sought only the public good, seconded the efforts of the Whig party, because by so doing they believed they were advancing the common weal. The Tories gave their assistance, when by so doing

they could injure the government. And thus the government was constantly in danger of being outvoted by an alliance of men who had no common object in view, and who were really more hostile to each other than to the ministry against which their united efforts were directed.

The conduct of the administration throughout all these proceedings appears consistent and steadfast. The mind of its presiding chief was eminently practical; his sole aim, apparently, was to govern the country in a manner that would conduce to the happiness of all classes, in so far as that happiness depended on the government. He was superior to every corrupt motive, and meted reward and favour according to the desert, and not the interest or connexions of those by whom it was sought. Strong prejudices he had—a soldier from his youth, he had never been accustomed to deal with men as equals. The relation of superior and inferior, of commander and commanded, was ever before him. Implicit obedience to an enlightened leader was in his idea the one necessary means to the desired end of good government. A long life of uninterrupted and striking success had so fixed this idea in his mind as to render impossible in him any submission of his own will and judgment to the approval and consideration of others. Popular government necessarily appeared to him as a wild and imbecile anarchy—parliamentary discussion a useless waste of time and words—and civil government according to regulated forms a pedantic and unreasonable submis-

sion to anile restraints. Confidence in the people's power and capacity to govern themselves he had none. While, therefore, he was willing himself to give to the people all the results of good government—while he was economical, just, and sagacious, he was ever opposed to every attempt to confer on the people legislative power, or to make them in any degree the arbiters of their own destiny. The consequence of this state of mind was, that he was ready to listen to every rational proposal for a practical improvement in the administration, in judicature, in finance; but he met with a stern refusal every suggestion by which the popular control over the government, through the House of Commons, would have been increased. The Whigs took advantage of this peculiar state of mind in the Duke, and towards the end of the session, as their hostile feelings became predominant, let no day pass without making some declaration in favour of a vague, unmeaning reform in the representative system.

The first topic for popular declamation was the distress which was said to exist in all parts of the country. This topic had been first chosen, because all sections of the opposition apparently agreed upon it. Tories, Whigs, and Radicals could equally bewail the misery and suffering of the industrious classes, and accuse the government of cruelty and heartless indifference, when they said, that the causes of such distress were beyond the control of parliament. The Duke of Wellington at once met these

lamentations with the plain question—'What do you propose?' 'You say that misery exists—you say we can relieve it—how? state the remedy.' The moment the allied parties in opposition attempted to point out a remedy, all union ceased. The most vociferous and pertinacious were those who fancied that the currency was the source of all the mischief, and the return to cash payments the real cause of the distress which they deplored. A paper currency was the never-failing receipt proposed by this class of reasoners for the alleviation of the national suffering. The Whigs generally, however, had supported Mr. Peel in his measures for the return to cash payments, and could not now therefore assent to the wisdom of the proposal to create high prices by means of a depreciated currency. Mr. Hume declared that the general distress resulted from the burthens which the people were compelled to bear, and he proposed to relieve them of this load of taxation by cutting down the expenditure which rendered such heavy taxation necessary. The Whigs took up this subject with great earnestness, and laboured it with commendable zeal and ability.

On the 12th of February, Sir James Graham, the member for Cumberland, propounded in an elaborate speech his views (which may be considered the views of his party on the subject, for Sir James was then a Whig) respecting one great item of expense—viz., the salaries of persons in office. His speech on this occasion contributed in no small degree to win for him the high position which he has since maintained—placing

him at once in the foremost ranks of those among the Whigs who then aspired to office.[1] His subsequent career justified the expectations which his efforts this year excited. To a clear and logical understanding he added great industry, and all his expositions were distinguished by an exceedingly neat and appropriate diction; a subdued and grave sarcasm lent interest to his argumentations: and while an accurate arrangement made his statements clear and effective, a sedate and collected manner gave weight and a certain sort of dignity to his discourse. As an administrator he shone afterwards without a rival among his Whig associates, and seemed by his ability destined soon to lead his friends amid the stormy conflicts of party warfare. The result has not hitherto justified this last anticipation. Timid and fastidious, he needs the robust hardihood of mind requisite for a political chief. As a second, none can surpass him in usefulness and ability. The responsibilities of a chief, however, seem to oppress his courage, and paralyse the powers of his intellect. To the reputation of an orator he has no claim. He is, nevertheless, an admirable speaker, and

[1] Sir James Graham, though at this time a Whig himself, did not come from a Whig stock. His father was a stanch Tory. Sir James early in life was intimate with of Mr. Lambton, afterwards Lord Durham; and through the friendly influence of Lord Grey's son-in-law, was offered a high office in the Whig government of 1830. Rumour asserts that great offence was given by the subsequent alliance of Sir James with the heir of the house of Derby. His subservience was not deemed equal to the supposed favours conferred on him by the dynasty of the Greys.

is ready and effective in debate; but that inspiration which passion gives he never knew; and unmoved himself, he is unable to win his way into the hearts of others. His speaking, indeed, is almost without a fault—simple, clear, grave; often earnest, it always wins attention, because always deserving it. He, nevertheless, leaves his hearer unmoved, and is more apt by his own cold demeanour to repel and offend his audience, than by his lucid arrangement and accurate argumentation to convince and lead them. He was and is, in short, among the most efficient administrators, as well as the least popular ministers of his day.

His proposal on the present occasion rested upon two assertions:—1. First, that the distress of all classes was so great as to render imperative some attempt to relieve them from the burthens under which they laboured; and, 2, next, that the great change which had been effected by legislative interference in the value of the currency had so much enhanced the salaries of all public officers as to make a reduction therein a matter of simple justice. To recal to living statesmen the language employed by them in times gone by is always an invidious though sometimes a necessary task. The language of the same man in office and out of office is proverbially different—though not on every occasion corruptly so;—and without any wish to impute corruption, a wholesome lesson may be imparted and received from a correct history of the successive steps of party-men to power, and the vary-

ing tenour of their language and their conduct. Sir James Graham was now before the world enacting the character of a virtuous, indignant, and sympathizing patriot; his conception of the part may be learned from the following glowing paragraph of that night's oration:—

'Sir, I have heard something of the luxury of the present times. I do not know whether the example was drawn from the gorgeous palaces of kings or the rival palaces of ministers, splendidly provided for them by the public; or from the banquets of some East India director, gorged with the monopoly of the China trade; or from some Jew loan contractor, who supplies hostile armies with gold drawn from the coffers of the Bank of England, and lends money to France arising out of profits on loans contracted here in depreciated paper, but which must be paid in gold. But, Sir, I must take leave to remark that we ought not to draw our notions of the state of the country from scenes like these.

> Ye friends to truth—ye statesmen, who survey
> The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,—
> 'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
> Between a splendid and a happy land.

'Where, I ask, are all the boasted advantages of this once happy country? Where are all the blessings which once distinguished her? Where are all the comforts which her children enjoyed for ages? Alas! Sir, with deep regret, I witness that all—all are gone! pinching hunger and gloomy despair now usurp their

station. The weavers throughout the country are earning only 4s. 2d. a-week, and their food is oatmeal, water, and potatoes. They work fourteen or sixteen hours a-day, and yet they can only procure this scanty remuneration to support their wives and families. It is an extraordinary fact, that, by dint of labour, the power-looms (which were supposed to have caused their distress) are absolutely under-wrought by these almost starving people.'[1]

When a man of the high standing, great ability, and finished education of Sir James Graham, could thus appeal to prejudice and ignorant passion, ought we to be surprised at finding the poor Chartist uttering the same foolish rant?

Having detailed the circumstances under which the salaries of all classes of functionaries had been enhanced, and proposed his scheme for their reduction, the honourable member for Cumberland thus significantly perorated upon the occasion:—

'The Duke of Wellington's administration is said to be founded on the dissolution of party feeling; it is intimated that the noble Duke possesses a receipt for the dispersion of party, and the blending of men of all sides and opinions. For instance, there is Lord Rosslyn from one party, Lord Privy Seal; and the other day the Mint was offered to the noble lord the member for Bucks, who is from another; we have an Attorney-General from the old opposition; and another honour-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 171.

able gentleman, from the ranks of the Danai, was lately appointed to a high judicial office in Scotland. Then, dropping from the free-traders, the noble Duke picks out a tame elephant for the India Board. This is an admirable nostrum. No doubt the noble Duke possesses the secret of dispersing parties and neutralising factions; but is the nostrum equally efficacious for the purpose of forming a party? or can a government be carried on without one? It would seem as if the noble Duke possessed a crucible whereby all parties are to be fused down in one mass for the benefit of the great alchemist who blows the coals. For my part, I do not much approve of this process, and I see no safety for the public interest except in dealing with each individual question, as it happens to be brought forward, upon its own abstract merits, without reference to the quarter whence it proceeds, without reference to the motives which dictated its introduction, or the effects which it may have on the fortunes or duration of the administration. It may be thought, as I have before stated, that the time is come when it is necessary to form a party for the tax-payer. I see nothing dishonourable in the conduct of the honourable member for Kent, or in the conduct of my honourable relative the member for Yorkshire, in the course they propose to pursue; and I am willing to act in concert with them for the furtherance of objects conducive to the public good. I shall not be deterred from discharging my duty by the imputation of improper motives. I owe it to my constituents, of whom I am

here the free representative, to discharge my duty. I seek for nothing at the hands of ministers; I owe them nothing: the only obligation I owe is to those who have conferred on me the honour of addressing this Commons House of Parliament—which, with all its faults, I consider the noblest assembly of freemen yet existing in the world.'[1]

Sir James Graham concluded by moving an explanatory resolution to the effect that as a resumption of cash payments had enhanced all salaries, which had previously been raised because of the depreciation in the currency, it was expedient to revise them for the purpose of making all possible reduction therein.

This motion was met on the part of the administration by an amendment which went beyond that of Sir James Graham, according to his own acknowledgment. The whole object, therefore, of the party move was lost. The popularity of the minister was not diminished, and the Whigs, if they still hoped to compel him to an alliance, or to remove him altogether, were forced to make yet more vigorous efforts, and bid still higher for public favour. They were not men to falter in such a course, and every day exhibited fresh instances of their hopes and their zealous pursuit of their ambitious projects. They had during the debate on Sir James Graham's motion evinced a desire for economy that was edifying to the nation at large. Lord Morpeth was really touching in his con-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 173.

fession of youthful errors, and his recantation of the heresy of extravagance. 'Not many years have passed over my head,' said the noble lord, 'and I have learned to look upon economy, I will not merely say as the soundest wisdom, but almost as the highest virtue that can distinguish a statesman.'[1] Mr. Spring Rice also was seized by the same ecstatic love of saving. And when Mr. Hume, a few days after, moved (15 Feb.) as an amendment on the order of the day—

> 'That this House do forthwith proceed to the repeal and modification of taxation to the largest possible extent which the reductions that may be made in the civil, military, and naval establishments of the country will admit, as a means of affording general relief to the country'—

Lord Howick seconded the motion, and a general chorus of approving Whigs was immediately raised. Lord Althorp, Mr. Charles Wood, Lord Howick, all insisted that it was the bounden duty of the House to proceed at once, and with a firm hand, to cut down the lavish expenditure by which the energies of the country were enfeebled, nay, almost destroyed. 'The people,' said Lord Howick, 'are taxed beyond endurance, and can no longer support such an army and navy as it has done. We are in the situation of a private individual who does not like to give up the luxuries and indulgences to which he has been accustomed; but

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 179.

like a private individual, we must do so if we cannot pay for them. If no other means can be found we must give up some of our foreign possessions.'[1] But the really significant speech of the evening was made by what is termed an independent member—one not expectant of office, and therefore supposed to speak in a disinterested spirit. Mr. Thomas Duncombe said, 'But, Sir, because I do not wish to see the Duke of Wellington or the right honourable gentleman opposite displaced, I do not say that I do not wish to see their government remodelled, and imbued with more ability, and adopting more liberal measures; for I have not yet, Sir, been able to discover the Whig measures of this Tory government alluded to by a noble lord.' And the closing observation of the honourable member seemed, in a few months after, to have been spoken in a spirit of prophecy. 'Before I sit down,' he said, 'I will warn his Majesty's government against exulting too much either in their numbers or their powers of victory, for I will tell them, again and again, if they persevere in their present system of lavish expenditure, deaf and heedless to the just calls and complaints of the people, they may find, when it is too late, that there is a majority out of doors, called public opinion, which will make their majority within doors, at least, yield and acknowledge the justness of the views of what they may consider this evening's despicable minority.'[2] This expression related to the

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 210. [2] Ibid. p. 213.

division which had just occurred; the numbers being—

For the original motion . . .	184
Noes	69
	115

Thus giving the government a majority of 115 against Mr. Hume's proposal. The opposition, however, did not even on this occasion attain the object they had in view. A refusal to accede to a proposed economy is always unpopular, and the opposition of the government to Mr. Hume's motion would probably have done them injury had they not immediately after propounded their own scheme of retrenchment. This was done on the 19th of February, as regarded the army, and compelled the unwilling approval of the leading members of the opposition. Mr. Stanley said, 'I think his Majesty's ministers are deserving of some consideration for the desire they have shown, in this instance, for retrenchment. I am unwilling to show that we have not a fair share of confidence in them. *** I certainly indulge a hope that further reductions are in progress, and that the amount of those reductions will be applied to the relief of the country by diminishing taxation.'[1] Lord Palmerston declared that wherever it was possible reductions had been made by the government. 'I cannot withhold my decided approbation,' said Lord Althorp, 'from the reduc-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 315.

tions proposed by the right honourable gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as far as they go. They are certainly greater than I expected; but yet I am bound to say they are not sufficient, when I consider the distressed state of the country. They are not sufficient to give any material relief. As I am on my legs, I may take the opportunity of thanking the right honourable gentleman opposite, whose speech of yesterday I have had an opportunity of considering with more attention, for the reforms he stated to be in his contemplation. The right honourable gentleman appears disposed to strike off more patronage than any other administration has ever before consented to resign.' Sir Edward Knatchbull, who being an angry friend was less easily pleased, nevertheless declared himself much gratified at the proposed reductions. Mr. Hume, indeed, though he accepted with thanks the economy proposed, insisted that much more ought to be accomplished, and as his demands and complaints at this moment served the purposes of the Whig opposition, the member for Montrose became suddenly a great favourite and sort of economical oracle. His industry and zeal were extolled—terms of courtesy were always employed when speaking of and to him—arrogance and insult were now out of fashion and wholly laid aside, and his honest endeavours to benefit his country received the praise they deserved, not because they deserved it, but because his labours tested the reforming tendencies of the government, and thus tended to embarrass and injure the ministers themselves.

Mr. Hume's proposals were, in reality, as little agreeable to the Whigs as to the administration. The sweeping reductions that he suggested, the principles of government which he at all times enunciated with most pertinacious and annoying consistency, had hitherto excited only the indignation of the Whig opposition. They were ever most careful to separate themselves from this radical reformer; ever ready to sneer at his schemes, to laugh at his vulgar and pitiful notions of saving, and to describe his plans of reform as anarchical and visionary. These shafts of ridicule, happily for the public, fell innocuous from the impenetrable shield of the good-humoured and courageous member for Montrose. He pursued his useful labours, careless alike of the blame or the approval of the opposition or the government. The public good was the object he sought, and with singular zeal and honesty he unflinchingly pursued the course which his plain good sense taught him was the right one. Much to his surprise he now found himself an object of almost unbounded panegyric, and that they who had delighted to taunt, now courted him. During the short career of Mr. Canning as minister, the vituperations of the Whigs amounted to downright and most offensive insolence. Mr. Hume could not be made to understand that his proposals had changed their character because power had changed hands: that what was wise and necessary during the administration of Lord Liverpool had become suddenly mischievous and ill-timed so soon as Mr. Canning was chosen prime

minister. This stolidity, as it was called, was reviled in every possible phrase of indignation and scorn by the angry and expectant Whigs. But no sooner was the administration dismissed from which they expected much, and that of the Duke of Wellington established, from whom they hoped at first nothing, than all anger against Mr. Hume ceased also. The language of blame was changed for that of eulogy and friendship: and what had been designated dulness and obstinacy, was now denominated a magnanimous disregard of all considerations but those of the public weal, and a persevering and admirable industry in the thankless duties of an honest reformer. The hopes of the opposition could always be accurately appreciated by a careful observation of the language they employed when speaking of Mr. Hume and his schemes for the reduction of expense, or the improvement of our financial regulations. As their hopes rose, their praise diminished; but when they determined to force the Duke into an alliance, by proposing popular plans, the extravagancies of Mr. Hume were of great assistance—and laudation was the order of the day.[1] As the hope of

[1] The warmth of eulogy may be well exemplified by the language of Mr. Brougham, who, when very angry with the ministers, spoke thus of Mr. Hume—whom he called 'my honourable friend the member for Aberdeen—that most faithful, that most useful, that most valuable representative of the people, to whom I wish a long life and prosperity in this House; he, I say, has the hearts of the people with him; and whether he brings forward his measures for the purpose of checking wasteful expenditure, on a Wednesday, I trust that now there is an end

an alliance with the Duke of Wellington grew every day less, the sweeping reforms of the member for Montrose rose in value, because they greatly contributed to make the public regard the administration with disfavour, and the opposition which supported Mr. Hume as the earnest friends of economical government. Throughout the session the friendship of the opposition to him increased in fervour, and when at length the dissolution came, and hostility to the administration was openly declared, it suited Whig policy to propose Mr. Hume as the popular candidate for Middlesex, and to support him with the whole weight of their party authority. This friendship continued until the defeat of the Duke of Wellington—then it ceased, at once and completely.

This debate was, like so many others during this season of expectancy, enlivened by a sally on the part of a so-called independent member. Mr. Hobhouse, (who had, throughout his parliamentary career, been known as the coadjutor of the Radical member for Westminster, Sir Francis Burdett,) thus marked his opinion of the intentions of the Whig opposition. 'A

---

to all objection and cavil to that course.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2630. If this praise be compared with the language of sarcasm employed by Mr. Brougham in 1827 respecting this most valuable representative, the difference will not fail to recal to the reader's recollection the varying relative positions of the speaker—of the subject of his eulogy and censure—and the government of the day.

good deal has been said of the play of parties in this House, and that we ought not risk the durability of a strong and well-disposed administration. I confess, Sir, that for my part I do not enter into these abstruse calculations, for I have seen enough of ministers in this country to know that the real friends of the people can never make way against these strong governments, and that it is only when we have what is called a weak government that we have had a reasonable chance of securing adequate sympathy for the public complaints. Therefore, as far as my vote is concerned, I shall as a general principle give it for the ministers who seem disposed to attend more to the voice of complainants out of doors than of the majority within; instead *of giving it to those who would climb into power over my shoulders, and then depend on sinister influence.*'[1]

That the Whigs, however, still retained some hopes of an alliance with the administration was plainly shown by their conduct during the discussions which took place upon the army estimates on the 22nd of February. The language of Mr. Hume was that of indignant remonstrance, because of the unnecessary extravagance which he asserted was evinced throughout our military system. The Whigs did not join in, did not dissent from this assertion,—but held aloof, using vague and unmeaning phrases, by which they

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. i. p. 313.

were not finally committed either to hostility or support with respect to the administration; though a sort of warning was given, that unless some advances were quickly made by the government of a friendly nature, meaning thereby an offer of a share of power and emolument, a more determined hostility would soon be shown by the expectant opposition. Sir Henry Hardinge moved that a sum not exceeding 3,415,333*l.* be granted for defraying the charge of the land forces at home and abroad (except those in India) for the current year—the number of men for the whole public service being 88,000 rank and file. The number provided for by the proposed vote was 81,000. Mr. Hume objected to such a sum being voted in the fifteenth year of peace, and proposed to substitute the sum of 2,550,000*l.* for that moved by government. This would have compelled a reduction of about 16,000 men from the number 88,000. To this large reduction Lord Althorp declared he could not assent, though he was prepared to support a motion for reducing the number by 5000. Sir H. Parnell thought the army might be reduced by 6538 men. The language employed by Mr. Hume on this occasion, though certainly violent and what is called in parliamentary phrase inflammatory, gave apparently no offence to the Whigs, although it was severely commented on by Mr. Peel and his colleagues. The opposition were well pleased to hear the explosion of Mr. Hume's indignation. The commotion it raised was useful to their ends, and being employed by one

not politically connected with their party, they derived all the benefit which could follow from the annoyance it produced, without partaking of the responsibility incurred by uttering menaces so violent, and recommendations which were undisguised incitements to something very like open resistance.

The opposition, nevertheless, found the task of rendering the government unpopular on the question of economy more difficult than they had anticipated. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his financial statement on the 15th of March, the reductions proposed by the government proved to be great, and were thought deserving of approbation even by Mr. Hume himself, and the opposition were able only to indulge in vague wishes, and general declarations of what they expected from the government, and were prepared themselves to support. After many reductions proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a large surplus of revenue still remained. They who were most conversant with the finances of the country, considered that economy was carried further than had been yet known, and that a spirit of fairness and complete freedom from jobbing or nepotism pervaded every branch of the administration. Mr. Hume, who was undoubtedly the most earnest advocate for retrenchment in the House, frankly acknowledged that 'the Chancellor of the Exchequer had gone as far as he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) imagined he could go with safety on the present occasion.' Mr. Bernall said, 'I should be fastidious indeed if I quar-

relled with the present budget as far as it goes.' Mr. Baring and Mr. Huskisson, both great authorities with the House and the public on such subjects, confessed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer 'had gone to the utmost verge of reduction possible in the present state of the country, without the substitution of other taxes.' And generally, the selection of taxes to be taken off was deemed judicious—and made solely with a view to the public, and not partial interests.

The efforts of the opposition became now more earnest and continuous. On the 22nd of March, the navy estimates were discussed, Mr. Hume as usual taking the lead in proposing specific reductions, and receiving yet a very qualified support from his so-called friends of the opposition. On the 25th of the same month, however, the opposition had a great financial field-day upon the debate that arose upon a motion made by Mr. Poulett Thomson for a select committee, 'to inquire into the expediency of making a revision of the taxes, so that the means of paying the sums voted by the House, and all other charges for the public service, may be provided with as little injury as practicable to the industry and improvement of the country.' A motion of this sort committed them to nothing—great professions could without danger be hazarded, and popularity gained without the risk of annoyance at a future period, in consequence of the declamation employed to set forth the great benefit likely to follow from the appointment of a committee of inquiry. The government resisted the motion, upon the ground that

it was a proposal for parliament and the government to relinquish their functions, and delegate their powers to a select committee of twenty-three members. Mr. Huskisson, growing every day more open in his hostility to his former friends, supported the motion. 'If the committee shall be refused,' said the right honourable gentleman, 'it will still be a source of much satisfaction to my mind, that the luminous statement of the member for Dover (Mr. P. Thomson) will go forth to the public, and that we shall find the benefit of this discussion in a future session; or at all events, when that time comes at which the government itself will be forced to propose measures of relief from the inconvenient pressure of the greatest proportion of the taxes of the country.'[1] The administration triumphed, however—the opposition not being able to muster more than 78 for their motion, while 167 voted against it.

Undismayed by this defeat, the opposition on the next day made a show of patriotism and economy, by opposing the grant of 900*l.* to Mr. Dundas and Mr. Bathurst, who being, the one a reduced commissioner of the navy, the other a reduced commissioner of the victualling board, had pensions granted them severally of 500*l.* and 400*l.* a year. Sir Robert Heron introduced the subject by a pathetic statement of the sufferings of the people, and spoke of 'these gentlemen as gorged with the public money,' and then pressed into his ser-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 103.

vice the names of Benbow, Barlow, Foley, Hardy, and Nelson, in order to create indignation at 'this mockery of the public distress by grants of this nature.' Mr. Peel stated plainly the circumstances under which the pensions had been granted, and left it to the House to decide. The sin of nepotism was at this time unpardonable in the opinion of the Whig opposition, and they gave a hopeful earnest of what they would themselves perform should fate hereafter give them power, by refusing on the present occasion to sanction a grant of money from the public purse to two young men allied to powerful families, simply because they were so allied. The grant was negatived by the House of Commons.

The king's health rapidly failed, and his death was daily expected. The exertions of the opposition kept pace with the decreasing powers of the king. As the end of the reign approached, it became more and more necessary on the part of the opposition to throw difficulties in the way of the administration. By making themselves formidable as opponents, they hoped to create in the Duke's mind a wish to have them for colleagues. In furtherance of this end, the industry and ability of Sir James Graham were in continual requisition. By successive motions, by constant proposals of economical reform, he managed to keep the administration always on the alert. On the 12th of March, he moved as an amendment on the order of the day, for the House to resolve itself into a committee of supply, the following resolution:—

'That it is the opinion of this House, that the late vacancy in the office of treasurer of the navy afforded his Majesty's ministers an opportunity of effecting a saving of 3000*l.* a-year, without any violation of existing engagements, and without any detriment to the public service.'

The closing sentences of the speech by which this resolution was supported, betrayed the real intentions of the speaker and his party. The enthusiasm attempted to be evinced was too clearly artificial to impose for an instant upon any understanding—but the desire to force his party into power was clearly seen in every word, and a consciousness that the world was aware of his wish and his design, appears to have dictated this significant peroration—

'Let us show,' said the honourable baronet, with theatrical fervour, 'that the House of Commons does not merit the imputation cast on it by the honourable and learned member for Clare—let us prove that there is still some spirit of independence in this House, and whatever side-long glances we may have cast towards the Treasury bench, let this meretricious toying with the minister have an end, and let us show, by our conduct, that in heart and feeling we still belong to the people. I am bound to state that the present time presents features which are sufficiently alarming. I think that this House is sinking fast in reputation, and it is of the last importance that we should retrieve our character in the eyes of those who have sent us here. If one spark of that fire which animated the

bosoms of our forefathers, and which yielded but for an hour to the iron hand of Cromwell, yet remain—if we are prepared to demand that pledges now broken, should be maintained good—if we are prepared to demand the fulfilment of the promise made by the government at the commencement of the session, that every saving should be made that could be effected without detriment to the public service—a promise broken by the present appointment to the treasurer-ship of the navy, before the ink was dry in which that promise was recorded on our journals—this then is the opportunity for that purpose. Let us prove to the Duke of Wellington himself, that the Commons are not to be mocked—that pledges to us are not to be lightly made, and still more lightly broken; and that we still dare to vindicate our authority, and to exercise our controlling power, and to make the opinions and feelings of the people available through the voice of parliament.'[1]

This was a somewhat bombastic mode of saying that the Whigs were tired of waiting on the pleasure of the Duke of Wellington to be admitted to power. The debate, however, was not without importance; every member of the Whig opposition who spoke on the occasion rivalled Mr. Hume himself in desiring economy; and Lord Howick considered that every interest of family and friendship ought with inflexible rigour be made to

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 739.

yield to a consideration of the public weal. These efforts, nevertheless, were not otherwise practically useful, as the government once more triumphed over the anxious and expectant opposition by a majority of 188 to 90. Again, on the 29th of March, Sir James Graham, not yet made desponding by defeat, pronounced another set oration on the popular subject of economy. Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by a motion on the part of the government to grant a sum not exceeding 85,025*l.*, for the purpose of defraying the salaries of the master-general of the ordnance, of the lieutenant-general of the ordnance, and other persons employed in its civil establishments at the Tower, Pall-Mall, and in Dublin, he again endeavoured to make the ministry sensible of the error of their policy, and read them a lesson on the virtues of frugality, keeping of promises, and of postponing private to public interests, that must have proved highly edifying to his friends as well as his opponents.

'Is it to be believed,' said the indignant Sir James, 'that his Majesty's ministers have already forgotten the frequent pledges they have deliberately given to the House upon this and other subjects connected with the public expenditure? With every appearance as things look now of having forgotten those pledges, for the purpose of advancing the objects of parliamentary patronage, it is little to be expected that they ought to continue to possess the confidence of parliament, or to secure the favourable sentiments

of the community at large. No cabinet can possess, or at least preserve, the support of the country which in times and circumstances like the present can determine to maintain the offices of lieutenant-general of the ordnance, and treasurer of the navy. Such a tone and temper in the conduct of the government can never be kept up with any regard to the strength and popularity of the cabinet; but, nevertheless, I have no doubt that the time is fast approaching when the force of public opinion will teach ministers to think less of their own patronage and private ends, and somewhat more of the wishes and necessities of the people. To give ministers another opportunity of taking the right course—at all events, to enable this House to do so, I shall conclude, Sir, by proposing, as an amendment to the present motion, that a sum not exceeding 83,825*l.* be substituted in the room of the original motion for the payment of the salaries and contingent expenses of the master-general, the surveyor-general, the clerk, the treasurer, and other chief officers of the ordnance department.'[1] The various members of the opposition party vied with each other in their earnest zeal and anxiety for the success of this proposal. Lord John Russell wished to be witty as well as patriotic. 'When I consider the conduct of government in resisting a proposition thus recommended and enforced, and compare it with their professions of economy, I

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1104.

cannot help thinking, that the character given of a lady in a popular modern publication may be well applied to them, for it may be said of the government, as was said of her, that she was more notorious for her professions of sincerity than for the sincerity of her professions.'[1] Lord Howick, Lord Althorp, and Lord Morpeth took a more arithmetical view of the question, arguing, and justly arguing, that as one person alone was needed to perform the duties of both offices—viz., of the master-general and lieutenant-general, to appoint two persons and to pay two persons was a waste of public money. The wit and the sense of the opposition were alike of no avail, the government having, on the division, a majority of 200 to 124.

The zeal of Mr. Robert Gordon soon led him also to emulate the economical fervour of his chiefs. On the 3rd of May the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day for a committee of supply in order to provide for the miscellaneous estimates. Mr. Gordon hereupon made a speech, in which he suggested that a select committee ought to be appointed to examine and report upon the items of these estimates. He complained of the slight degree of interest which committees of supply excited—a few persons only, he said, attended to them. By these year after year the same objections were made, to which also annually the same polite evasive answers

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1106.

were returned by those in authority. He then proceeded to enumerate and observe upon various questionable items, and exhibited at once his own industry and patriotic ardour for frugality, and the unfeeling extravagance and corrupt cupidity of happy officials. He repeated the fashionable phrases respecting the intensity and extent of the public distress, and enlarged on the common-places of opposition declamation. He wound up his discourse with a sarcasm upon the constitution of the House—an exclamation by Mr. O'Connell affording him an opportunity of giving an air of impromptu to the set phrases which he had prepared, for the close of his speech. The regularity with which every opposition speaker recurred to the same idea, shows how intent the whole party was upon the immediate acquisition of office.

'I will not now say more, except earnestly to call on all parts of the House to recollect that at this moment the eyes of their constituents are upon them.'

This solemn nonsense was too much for Mr. O'Connell's patience—and he suddenly and loudly exclaimed,

'Such as have any.'

'Whereupon Mr. Gordon, nothing daunted, made a virtue of necessity, and thus attempted to escape from the ridicule to which he was justly subject—

'The honourable member for Clare says—Such as have any, and a most proper and excellent hint it is, and I may here say, that 'one consolation I have in seeing so many members without constituents support government is, that the subject must force itself into

notice. Hitherto, the constitution of the House has not been so strongly felt as might have been expected, because the great borough proprietors have been in the habit of dividing their favours pretty equally, but now so large a mass of them support the government, that it is impossible but that the subject must attract the attention of the public.'[1]

The confession thus unconsciously made, curiously illustrates the political morality of the speaker, and the class to which he belonged. The faulty composition of the House of Commons excited no complaint so long as the great borough proprietors distributed the powers and emoluments of office pretty equally among the members of the two great parties of the aristocracy. But when the Whigs found themselves entirely excluded, then they raised their voices against the system of representation. The real evil to the country, however, was the same in both cases. The conduct of the government and the cost of it were the same—the only difference was in the persons who enjoyed the benefits of office. The Whigs grew loud in their complaints, and talked about the country and the public interest, and enlarged on the necessity for a reform, when by the operation of the system they believed themselves permanently deprived of power and emolument.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in answer to Mr.

---

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1494.

Gordon's proposal, stated that for his part 'he felt a great anxiety that the House should have the means of judging of the whole expense, and was therefore ready to say that if it was the general feeling of the House that the estimate should be referred to a select committee, he should no longer resist that feeling.' The particular estimate in question was for the repairs of Windsor Castle, in which, at that moment, George the Fourth was lying in his agony. Mr. Brougham, during the discussion, pointedly alluded to this circumstance, and by the tone of his remarks, gave the ministry to understand that his patience was entirely exhausted. The lavish expenditure on Windsor Castle had been incurred solely to gratify the king. But his reign and life now drew nigh to a close: deference to his wishes ceased to be a means of gratifying personal ambition—and the general opposition evinced to the grant proposed, though described as resulting from deference to the decided sense of the country, seemed rather the offspring of that contemptuous indifference which but too commonly awaits the desires of a dying monarch. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer consented to withdraw his motion, the conviction flashed with irresistible force upon the mind of every one present, that the tomb would soon close over the monarch in whose name they all were acting.

May 10 was again a supply night, and exhibited the edifying spectacle of the whole opposition labouring to curtail expenditure. Mr. Hume was now no longer left to depend upon his solitary industry. Re-

trenchment became a labour of love—and many excellent and zealous panegyrics were pronounced upon the virtue of frugality. Sir James Graham again distinguished himself by his earnestness and industry. He gave notice that he would move for a return, which would show distinctly the amount of salaries, fees, &c. &c., derived by all the principal servants of the Crown.

'The honourable member for Dorset does not mean, I am sure,' exclaimed the member for Cumberland, 'to stoop to ignoble game, while flights of ill-omened birds of prey are floating in the upper regions of the air.'[1] The matter-of-fact Chancellor of the Exchequer was startled by this poetical burst of the northern baronet, and with naiveté almost affecting observed, 'The honourable baronet has stated that I am 'a bird of prey.' Now, I should like to know whether I am more entitled to such an epithet, when I am honestly, though perhaps not so efficiently as I could wish, discharging my duty to my country, and receiving the fees attached to my office—whether, I repeat, I am more entitled to the character of a 'bird of prey' than himself, who has succeeded to a large hereditary revenue, of which he is the lord and possessor. Sir, I know not from what vocabulary the honourable gentleman derives his phraseology, or why I am to receive in a society of gentlemen the appellation of a 'bird of

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1609.

prey.'' Sir James Graham hereupon frankly expressed sorrow for having used the phrase, but having apologized for the form of the expression, 'I still,' he said, 'adhere to the spirit. I do consider it unworthy of the House of Commons to seek to cut down the salaries of poor clerks, when persons enjoying power, patronage, profit, fortunes, and a thousand advantages which those clerks do not possess, remain in undisputed possession of great and undiminished salaries.'[1] A generous principle which needed in succeeding times to be often invoked. A contest, however, arose about an under-secretary's salary. Mr. Hume, consistent throughout, and wishing honestly to apply the same principle of economy on all occasions, started a difficulty as to this item. Mr. C. Wood, in a fit of new-born virtuous frugality, seized upon the occasion to vote a reduction of it, hoping to gain popularity at the expense of the unfortunate underling. He was defeated, however, the numbers being—

For the amendment	106
Against it	178

Disdaining to fly at ignoble game, Sir James Graham on the 14th of May moved for a return of all salaries, profits, pay, fees, &c., whether civil or military, held and enjoyed by each of the members of his Majesty's most honourable privy council, specifying with each name the total amount received by each

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1609.

individual, &c.'[1] The speech with which this motion was introduced, was distinguished by the usual ability of the mover, and as usual betrayed his impatience and annoyance, in consequence of his anomalous position as one of a friendly opposition. He and his friends were evidently tired of this equivocal character. Quoting the words of Lord Castlereagh, he suddenly stumbled on the phrase, 'If I were to meet an opposition.' Sir James with prepared surprise, and as if under the influence of an unexpected emotion, exclaimed, 'Opposition! ay, Sir, that was in those days before we on this side of the House had transferred our services from the people to the Crown, and had become his Majesty's opposition.' He then declared that he sought to lay bare the gains only of the higher offices of government, and insisted that the pressing exigencies of the people justified his attempts at economy, and that his motion would test the conduct of the administration, and would decide if it really placed its reliance on public opinion—whether it cared for patronage, was regardless of corrupting influences; whether as it was pledged to do away with all useless offices, and retrench all unnecessary expenditure, it was prepared to violate the pledges it had so solemnly given.' The government met this motion by an amendment which left out all the words of the original motion from the word 'military' to the end of the question, in order to add these words, 'held and engaged by all

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1749.

public officers between the 5th of January, 1829, and the 5th of January, 1830; the total amount of which shall exceed, leaving a blank for any sum the honourable baronet may like to name, in order that he may not be incumbered with a larger return than he wishes.' This was evidently an evasion—not a wise one—and it was immediately exposed and triumphed over by the eager, and now openly hostile opposition. The object of the amendment was to save privy-councillors as a specific class from remark by confounding them with many others. The original motion was seen to be intended *ad invidiam*, and the government unwisely attempted to shield the persons thus sought to be exposed. Every man who receives the public money ought at all times to be ready without hesitation to submit his salary to inquiry. The observation of Lord Althorp on the occasion was dictated by common sense and common honesty. 'Perhaps the motion of the right hon. gentleman is so extensive, that it would not bring the case fairly before the House; for as I have said before, short documents always convey more information to members generally than those in greater detail.' Suspicion was naturally excited by this proceeding, and freely expressed. The virtue of the opposition was rampant upon the occasion. Mr. Huskisson damaged his old friends by assuming the mischievous office of a friendly mediator, and by professing, on the part of privy-councillors in general, great anxiety for the adoption of the original motion of Sir James Graham. The government persevered, nevertheless,

in their determination, and carried the amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer by 231 against 147.[1]

The administration could not fail to perceive the change that was taking place in the spirit and language of the opposition. Some of their indiscreet friends, indeed, remarked upon it. In this debate General Grosvenor accused Sir James Graham of bringing forward a vexatious and agitating question—saying that one would have supposed that he had come from the other side of the water, for really this motion is such a specimen of agitation, that it would not have been unworthy of the honourable member for Clare himself; and he considered it, he said, inconsistent, because Sir James Graham had stated, only a few weeks before, that there was only one question that divided him from ministers, meaning that of the currency. The answer given by Sir James Graham to this home thrust was, that he had narrowly watched the conduct of the administration since the commencement of the session; that he had contrasted their professions with their acts: 'I have seen them refuse to reduce the office of lieutenant-general of the ordnance, after the recommendation of the finance committee; and the points of difference between them and me have increased.' This last assertion was accurately true. The difference had increased; but not on account of the pretences here suggested. Every one knew the

---

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 1755.

cause of quarrel was not the breach of promises alleged; but that which was in everybody's mind, though mentioned by none — viz., an indifference, not to say hostility to an alliance with the Whig opposition entertained by the head of the administration now assailed.

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF SESSION OF 1830.—REFORM IN PARLIAMENT.—DEATH OF GEORGE IV.

THE opposition, however, did not content themselves with the one popular demand for economy; that of parliamentary reform was also employed as a means of injuring the administration, and winning public favour.

The system of representation, if system it could be called, according to which the House of Commons was chosen, had long been a subject of complaint and discussion; and during the latter years of the disastrous war waged with our American colonies became a topic of anxious consideration. The public interest in the question indeed varied with the fortunes of the nation. In times of distress or disaster, it excited serious attention; but when prosperity and success returned, it seems to have passed almost out of remembrance. The matter, nevertheless, was at no time really forgotten; for though pressing public exigencies might and did induce the people occasionally to postpone their desires—although great prosperity sometimes led to a temporary forgetfulness—the cry for reform always recurred, and quickly. The very exigency or excitement which caused the

momentary apathy respecting this great popular demand, always was sure in the end to bring back the recollection of it with increased force,—and to the faulty constitution of the House of Commons, liberal politicians were ever prone to ascribe nearly all the national misfortunes.[1]

The disruption of the empire, and the forced independence of our colonies, were disasters, which were in this manner laid at the door of the House of Commons; and the demand for a reform in the representative system became loud, continued, and universal. Committees for the purpose of enforcing this demand were framed in all parts of the country; and men of the highest standing, whether by fortune or ability, placed themselves at the head of the national movement.[2] Motions on the subject were annually made in parliament; and they who sought power and

[1] The question of a reform in parliament was mooted before the termination of the American war—but, for my purpose to go further back is not necessary. 'Lord Chatham was one of the first persons who called the attention of the public to the absolute necessity of a reform in parliament, to redeem the nation from ruin; it was the great feature of his life, and the foundation of his fame.'—*Erskine's Defence of Tooke.* In 1770 he first insisted on the necessity 'of infusing a new portion of health into the constitution.'

[2] Mr. Fox, in 1780, was a delegate from Westminster to 'the Convention which was held to consider of the best means for obtaining a reform in parliament. His opinions were always adverse to universal suffrage, yet nevertheless his name appears to the petition which asked it of the House of Commons, being signed as Chairman of the body.'—*Erskine's Defence of H. Tooke.*

distinction as statesmen soon discovered that supporting parliamentary reform was an excellent mode of forwarding their ambitious views.

Mr. Pitt, just then beginning his political career, joined the ranks of the reformers, and was received by them with rapturous applause. In 1782, May 7, he made his first motion for reform in the House of Commons, really as the organ of one great body of reformers out of it.[1] He was then in opposition, or rather he was not of the administration of which Lord Rockingham was the head, and in which Mr. Fox was Secretary of State. This motion, which was 'that a committee be appointed to inquire into the state of the representation in parliament, and to report to the House their observations thereon,' was negatived,—thus showing that the great body of the Whigs of those days, completely represented by the existing administration, were opposed to any reform of the representative system.[2] Burke indeed was

[1] Sheridan moved, at a meeting held at the Duke of Richmond's, that Mr. Pitt should be requested to move a reform of parliament in the House of Commons. See his evidence on H. Tooke's trial, vol. xxiv. p. 294, *State Trials.*

[2] Mr. Fox supported the motion, together with Sir George Saville and others, nevertheless Horne Tooke blamed the Whigs on this occasion in his *Letter to Lord Ashburton.* 'What! can they who have carried all for themselves, carry nothing for the people, who, if ministers are themselves to be credited, have pushed them into office. The people know that if all the present administration had chosen to do them justice, if they had been half as unanimous for national rights as they have been for national honours and emoluments, the question would

violent, as well as eloquent, in his opposition to the proposal, extolling the constitution as almost without speck or blemish, and demanding, as Mr. Canning did in after years, that the tree should be judged by its fruits—the constitution by its influence on the welfare of the nation—exclaiming, 'It is true that to say your constitution is what it has been, is no sufficient defence for those who say it is a bad constitution. It *is* an answer to those who say that it is a degenerate constitution. To those who say it is a bad one, I answer, look to its effects. In all moral machinery, the moral results are the tests.'[1] Among these results the people pointed to lost America, and to that terrible struggle, through which the lately expelled minister, Lord North, had been steadily supported by the House of Commons. Mr. Burke had throughout these disastrous proceedings found himself, when opposed to the minister, in a hopeless minority; and not till the end of the conflict, when the colonies were irretrievably lost, was he, or were his friends, able to defeat the administration, or put an end to the war. Burke, however, was not inconsistent. The people, as well as the House of Commons, desired to reduce the colonies by force. The

---

have been highly carried last Tuesday. Good God, is it always to be thus? one paymaster *denies*, the other despises the voice of the people.' * * * 'The people are no longer to be cheated, they look to the administration for the late defeat of their wishes.'

[1] Mr. Burke's speech on the motion of Mr. Pitt in 1782.

war was at the commencement highly popular—when defeat came, opinions changed in doors as well as out—and so far as the American war could be employed as evidence, it justified the assertion, that the House of Commons accurately represented the feelings and the intelligence of the nation.[1]

Again, on the 7th of May, in the next year, 1783, Mr. Pitt brought the question of parliamentary reform before the House of Commons. But instead of asking for a committee, he proposed three resolutions:

1. The first,—That it is the opinion of this House that measures are highly necessary to be taken for the future prevention of bribery at elections.

2. That for the future, when the majority of votes for any borough should be convicted of gross and notorious corruption before a select committee of that House appointed to try the merits of any election, such borough shall be disfranchised, and

---

[1] Mr. Pitt, however, distinctly accused the House of Commons of being the cause of the distresses resulting from the American war. 'Would the people of England,' he asked, 'have suffered the calamities to which they had lately been subject,' if there always had been a House of Commons who were the faithful stewards of the interests of their country?' &c. This was in 1785, upon his third and last motion in favour of reform. Mr. Fox, also, insisted that although, with the people generally, the war was unpopular, the general election which took place towards the end of the war made a very small change in the composition of the House of Commons. He gave his testimony on this subject in his speech in 1797 on Mr. Grey's motion for a reform in parliament and quoted Mr. Pitt, who had made use of the fact as an argument in favour of reform in 1782.

the minority of voters not so convicted shall be entitled to vote for the county in which such borough shall be situated.

3. That an addition of knights of the shire and of representatives of the metropolis should be added to the state of the representation.

Again, the proposals of Mr. Pitt were negatived, the Coalition ministry being in power. The plan of the right honourable gentleman was, nevertheless, not one that need have created alarm in the minds of those who at that time returned the House of Commons—as the only real effect of his scheme would have been to strengthen the hands of the possessors of land. They already were the dominant party in the state, and Mr. Pitt's scheme would simply have added to their influence.

In this year (1783) also appeared the somewhat celebrated letter of the Duke of Richmond to Colonel Sharman, in which he set forth his own views and plans, which met with great favour and nearly general acquiescence from the various societies and committees appointed in different parts of England, Ireland and Scotland, to discuss the subject, and press it upon the attention of parliament. The Irish volunteers, assembled at Lisburn, wrote to the Duke upon the subject of the Irish system of representation, requesting to know his opinions upon the mode of remedying the defects therein, which they signalized. The Duke's letter in reply set forth his plan, which may be shortly described in the now well-known

phrase of—universal suffrage and annual parliaments. To the vote by ballot he was decidedly opposed. This plan he had so early as 1780 embodied in a bill which he proposed for acceptance to the House of Lords; not, he said, 'as a perfect work, but merely to show how easily the objections to the practicability of the plan, and the inconveniences that are suggested, might be got over.' With regard to Mr. Pitt's scheme he stated, 'I am persuaded, that if the scheme for additional county members had proceeded any further, infinite difficulties would have arisen in adjusting it. Neither the Yorkshire committee nor Mr. Pitt have given the detail of their plan.'[1]

This sweeping measure never gained the support of the Whig party, though the most distinguished among them lent, as we have seen, the unwilling support of his name to the proposal.[2] Mr. Fox was then (*i.e.* in 1780) eager to drive Lord North from power, and gladly seized upon the assistance which the public discontent and the respectability of the petitioners afforded him. Well aware that the House of Commons would turn a deaf ear to the specific

[1] This letter and plan of the Duke of Richmond became, Erskine said, 'the very scripture of all these societies'—meaning the various societies established for the purpose of promoting parliamentary reform at that period and subsequently.

[2] Mr. Fox, in 1793, refused to present a petition to the House of Commons asking for universal suffrage, because he was an enemy to universal suffrage.—Evidence of Mr. Francis on the trial of Hardy, p. 1106, vol. xxiv. *State Trials.*

demand of the people, he sought by this somewhat questionable means to enlist into his service the general dissatisfaction which had led the people to petition.

The Coalition administration was doomed to a short existence. On the 18th of December, 1783, they were unceremoniously dismissed, and Mr. Pitt became prime minister. After many arduous struggles, the majority once possessed by the Whigs was broken down, the parliament was dissolved, and a new one called; which by an overwhelming majority supported the new administration, and for ever annihilated the strength of Mr. Fox and his friends. Mr. Pitt was now omnipotent. In order to mark his own opinion of the importance of parliamentary reform, he not only spoke of it in his speech on the address as 'the subject which of all others lay nearest his heart,' but on the 1st of February he moved that the House be called over, in order to discuss his motion respecting it. And on the 17th of April, in 1785, he, then at the very acme of his power, again proposed a reformation in the system of parliamentary representation, by asking leave to bring in a bill for that purpose. His plan was certainly remarkable, if not very wise or worthy of adoption. 'It consisted,' he said, 'of two parts. * * * The first was calculated to obtain an early, if not an immediate change in the representation of the boroughs; and the second was intended to establish a rule by which the representation should change with the changes of the

country. It was the clear and determined opinion of every speculatist, that there should be an alteration of the present proportion between counties and boroughs; and that in the change a larger proportion of members should be given for the populous places than for places that had neither property nor people.'[1]

He proposed, therefore, (and the *therefore* is curious,) that certain decayed boroughs, to the number of thirty-six, should be disfranchised, and their seventy-two members be given to the counties; but that this disfranchisement should take place only upon the application of the boroughs, and that they should be paid the value of the borough by the state. What could be meant by such a proposition seems impossible to be conceived. What constituted the borough, and how the price was to be estimated, was not well explained. 'He had no doubt,' he said, 'in his own mind, but that the boroughs to which he alluded would voluntarily surrender their franchise to parliament, on such consideration being given;' and he proposed that a fund should be established for the purpose of purchasing the rights of those who in their boroughs had the power of voting.

The second part of his plan related to providing members for populous places—then unrepresented; and this was to be done by means of any decayed

---

[1] *Pitt's Speeches*, vol. i. p. 232.

boroughs that might yet remain over and above the thirty-six first selected. They were to have the power of voluntary surrender for a consideration, and the right of returning the members was to be transferred to some populous place desiring to acquire it; and this scheme, he believed, 'comprehended' what he conceived to be 'a final and complete system, and which would ease the minds of gentlemen with respect to any future scheme of reform being attempted, or being necessary.'

The plan thus proposed by the prime minister in the plenitude of his power was negatived; the Ayes in favour of bringing in a bill being 174

Noes 248

And with this motion ended all Mr. Pitt's endeavours to reform the House of Commons.

We shall quickly find a great change in his opinions and his conduct; brought about, as he said, by the excesses of the French revolution. But of his feelings in 1785 respecting reform in parliament, the following expressions are a striking and most important evidence. On Mr. Fox's motion to erase from the journals of the House of Commons the former resolutions respecting the Westminster scrutiny, made on the 9th of March of that year, Mr. Pitt, when speaking of the character of that House, said, 'he was still in hopes, further, to see every local prepossession which now stood between the empire and its true interests, vanish; and he derived a flattering presage from the character of the House,

that the great question which was nearest his heart—that on which the whole and only prospect of a final triumph over every obstacle to greatness and to glory depended—that alone which could entitle Englishmen to the appellation of free, and that alone could ensure to wise, to virtuous, and to constitutional endeavours, a victory over factious ambition or corrupt venality —*the great and stupendous question of a parliamentary reform*, would be taken up with a degree of determined and upright boldness, that must soon be crowned with success.' Spite of these his ardent anticipations, he was, though a powerful minister, defeated; and men doubted of his sincerity when they found that the question nearest his heart was soon altogether disregarded,[1] and that all who in after years endeavoured to act upon the principles and according to the rules which he had once espoused and advocated, were by him persecuted with unrelenting vigour and perseverance. Mr. Pitt excused himself by saying, that he had seen ample reason to change his opinion. If that were so, it did not excuse his harsh and cruel conduct towards those, who, having had his authority in support of their belief only a few years before, had not so quickly as himself been terrified by the spectacle which a neigh-

[1] 'The business of reform appeared to have slept from 1785 to 1790, when it was again brought forward by Mr. Flood,' said Mr. Grey, in 1793. The interval was one of those periodical fits of apathy above spoken of.

bouring nation afforded. Because the people of France, long oppressed by a corrupt government, and a debauched aristocracy, when freed from bondage, were wild and violent, and brutal in their conduct, Mr. Pitt believed, or said he believed, his former efforts in favour of an equal and more rational system of representation to have been impolitic and dangerous. Many others, however, who had acted with him, did not draw the same conclusions from the excesses of the French people as to the probable conduct of the English who had for centuries lived under constitutional government. Mr. Pitt, nevertheless, pursued them with the whole force of the law, aud even endeavoured to wrest the law so as to render it the instrument of his vengeance. The change was wrought in him after 1785: in 1793 the extent of that change was seen.

In 1792, Mr. Grey gave notice that he would in the succeeding session submit to the consideration of the House, a motion respecting a reform in the representation of the people. Hereupon Mr. Pitt took the unusual course of remarking upon this notice; and explained how it was, that the seven years which had passed over himself as minister had altogether altered his views with respect to this very subject which he had declared was the one stupendous question upon which the honour and welfare of the nation depended. He objected to the time and mode of bringing this same subject forward. First, there was no chance of success: but he himself, when submitting a motion on

the same subject to the House of Commons in 1782, chose to ask simply for a committee to consider the subject, because his hopes were slight of being able to frame any plan which would meet with success; thus showing, that at that period success or the prospect of it was not the criterion by which he determined on the propriety of his own proceeding. Secondly, however, he feared the great risks that were run by the attempt: 'He saw no chance of succeeding, in the first place, but saw great danger of anarchy and confusion in the second.' When Mr. Pitt moved in the matter, England had been humiliated by defeat, America had established a republic, and the empire was supposed to be in danger of absolute annihilation. In 1792 France had thrown off, with many wild excesses indeed, a horrible despotism; but England was safe, and Mr. Grey only proposed an alteration in the representation—not wishing, not intending any further change in the institutions of the country. When Mr. Pitt moved, the whole country was in a state of excitement; a convention was actually sitting in London, to which delegates were sent from all parts of the country. The general demand was for universal suffrage and annual parliaments. With this Mr. Pitt did not agree; he nevertheless pressed his motion, and braved the risk of inducing thereby a still greater change than he himself desired. When, however, in 1790-91-92-93 the very same steps were taken—when delegates were chosen, when a convention was proposed, and a demand for a reform was

loudly made—he chose to say, that a still greater change was intended; that monarchy was aimed at; that a republic was sought; and therefore he persecuted all those who were now reformers, and placed Horne Tooke and Hardy and others upon trial on a charge of high treason, for acts which he had himself sanctioned by his own example ten years before.[1]

In 1793, Mr. Grey brought forward his promised motion, and the statements he then made, and the

---

[1] Erskine thus described his own feelings upon this subject:—in his exordium to his defence of Horne Tooke, he thus speaks of his situation when defending Hardy:—

'I appeared in this place as the representative of a poor, lowly, and obscure mechanic, known only of course to persons in equal obscurity with himself; yet in his name and person had to bear up against a pressure with which no advocate in England ever before had to contend for the most favoured and powerful subject—I had to contend, in the first place, against the vast and extensive—but after the verdict which has been given, I will not say the *crushing* influence of the Crown.'—He then states other reasons arising from the condition of the popular feeling, and thus sums up his difficulties: 'These prepossessions, just in themselves, but connected with dangerous partialities, would *at any time* have been sufficiently formidable, but at what season had I to contend with them? I had to contend with them when a cloud of prejudices covered every person whose name could be mentioned or thought of in the course of my defence—prejudices not only propagated by honest though mistaken zeal, but fomented in other quarters by wretchedness beyond the power of language to express—and all directed against the societies of which the prisoners were members, *only because they had presumed to do what those who* prosecuted them had done before them in other times; and for the doing of which they had raised their fortunes, and acquired the very power to prosecute and to oppress.'—*State Trials*, vol. xxv. p. 256.

petitions he then presented, served in after years as the text-book of reformers, and contributed very materially to keep alive in the memory of men the great question of reform. The Society of the Friends of the People, in their petition, offered among other things to prove that peers and the Treasury actually nominated ninety-seven members, and procured by influence the return of seventy more, making together one hundred and sixty-seven; that ninety-one individual commoners in the country procured the election of one hundred and thirty-nine, and that one hundred and sixty individuals absolutely returned three hundred and six members—a majority of the entire House of Commons.[1] These assertions Mr. Grey offered to prove: 'I assert this,' he said, 'to be the condition of England; if you say it is *not*, do justice to yourselves by calling on us for the proof, and expose your calumniators to reproach; but if it be the condition of England, shall it not be redressed?' The House of Commons, under the direction of Mr. Pitt, refused to listen to the proposal;[2] and immediately declared, that all the per-

[1] *New Par. Hist.* vol. xxx. p. 787, *et seq.*—See more particularly the speech of Mr. Fox on this debate, in which his views on the subject of parliamentary reform are very clearly stated, and the change in Mr. Pitt's opinions severely criticised.—*Fox's Speeches*, vol. v. p. 102, *et seq.*

[2] The division showed significantly the altered state of the question, the numbers being—

For Mr. Grey's motion	41
Against it	282

sons who by means of the various reforming societies then existing sought a reform in parliament, were in reality traitors to the government, employing reform as a pretence; and steps were at once taken by the government to bring the most active members of these associations to trial for high treason. Fortunately these prosecutions signally failed; Hardy, Horne Tooke, and others were acquitted, and thus was a foul stain on our annals happily prevented. But the nation was sorely terrified by the conduct of the French people; they therefore now ceased for the most part to agitate for reform, and the great Whig party was rent in twain by the schism which occurred upon the question of our policy with regard to France; Burke and by far the greater portion of the party went over to the minister; Mr. Fox and a small, a very small minority, still held together as an opposition—endeavouring first to prevent a war, and afterwards, when war had been declared, striving earnestly to wean the nation from its hostility, and to promote peace between the two countries.

The question of parliamentary reform was again pressed by Mr. Grey in 1797—supported, though not heartily, by Mr. Fox.[1] The Whigs, in fact, as a

[1] In 1797, Mr. Fox very fairly described the degree of interest he took in the measure, thus: 'I have invariably declared myself a friend to parliamentary reform by whomsoever proposed, and though, in all the discussions that have taken place, I have had occasion to express my doubts as to the efficacy of the particular

party, had by this time given up the question altogether.

The conduct of Mr. Fox upon this occasion was remarkable, and resulted rather from a wish to oppose and annoy Mr. Pitt, than from any sincere desire to bring about the reform which Mr. Grey proposed. Mr. Grey being absent, Mr. Fox in his name, and it is said to the surprise of his own friends, gave notice of the motion.[1] But all his positions in the speech in which he supported the proposal of Mr. Grey were hypothetical, and in a great measure justified the description given by Burke of his language and conduct in 1793 —'The conduct of Mr. Fox appears to be far more inexplicable than theirs who propose the individual representation; for he neither proposes anything, nor suggests that he has anything to propose, in lieu of the present mode of constituting the House of Commons. On the contrary, he declares against all the plans which have yet been suggested either from him-

---

mode, I have never hesitated to say that the principle itself was beneficial; and that though not called for with the urgency which some persons, and among others the right honourable gentleman, Mr. Pitt, declared to exist, I constantly was of opinion that it ought not to be discouraged.'—*Fox's Speeches*, vol. vi. p. 343.

[1] Mr. Fox sat, on this occasion, between Lord George Cavendish and Mr. Whitbread; and the latter is reported to have related, that when Mr. Fox sat down, after giving the notice of motion, he exclaimed, 'There, what do you think of that?' Lord George expressed astonishment, saying, 'You are not for reform.' Mr. Fox answered, 'No, no; but we must do something.'

self or others: yet thus unprovided with any plan whatsoever, he pressed forward this unknown, reform with all possible warmth; and for that purpose in a speech of many hours, he urged the referring to a committee the libellous impeachment of the House of Commons by the Association of the Friends of the People.' Mr. Burke was at this time in great alarm respecting French principles, and charged Mr. Fox with a deliberate intention of introducing them into England for purposes of anarchy and confusion. This was a wild exaggeration. The real motive in the mind of Mr. Fox was the wish to weaken Mr. Pitt. He thought by recalling the conduct of the premier when a reformer, he could cast odium and ridicule upon him now. The charge of inconsistency could in this instance be successfully brought, and was believed likely to be injurious. This led Mr. Fox to support Mr. Grey and his motion.

The plan of Mr. Grey, Mr. Fox said, was the best he had yet seen submitted to parliament. 'Though I have constantly been a friend to the principle, I have never before seen a specific plan that had my cordial approbation. That which came nearest, and of which I least disapproved, was the plan of an honourable gentleman who is now no more (Mr. Flood); he was the first person who suggested the idea of extending what might be proper to add to representation, to housekeepers, as to a description of persons the best calculated to the representative

system.[1] My honourable friend's plan built upon this idea is an improvement of it, since it is not an attempt even to vary the form and outline, much less to new-model the representation of the people.' Mr. Grey proposed to leave the number of the House the same as before, but to increase the county representation from 92 to 113. A division of counties was also suggested; and he proposed to extend the right of voting not merely to freeholders, but to copyholders and leaseholders paying a certain annual rent for a certain number of years. The right of voting in boroughs was to be in householders, but of what value the house was to be was not stated. Two other provisions were important—a voter was only to vote for one member, and the elections were to take place throughout the whole kingdom at one time. The Reform Bill of 1830 bore a strong resemblance in principle to this outline given by Mr. Grey in 1797. The motion of Mr. Grey, however, was again negatived, though the minority was larger than in 1795: the numbers being—

For Mr. Grey's motion . . .	91
Against it	256

From this period the party of Mr. Fox seceded from parliament. They had lost all hope of driving

[1] I quote from the octavo edition of *Mr. Fox's Speeches*—but they are evidently very imperfectly reported, and the paragraphs in the text are hardly intelligible, though we may guess at their meaning.

Mr. Pitt from power, and until the end of 1799 withdrew from the House of Commons. Of the justice or wisdom of this secession, I am not called upon to speak. Following the fortunes of reform, I meet the incident which requires to be mentioned—whether the step were judicious, need not for my purpose be decided.

From this motion of Mr. Grey, unto the year 1830, the Whig party, when called upon to express an opinion on the subject of reform, were anxious rather to separate themselves from what were called the Radical reformers, than to prove themselves friends to any proposal having for its object a change in our representative system.[1] Lord Grey indeed was still true to his early opinions, but he had lost hope, and age had in some measure altered his views upon the matter; being less sanguine he was therefore less eager for change—less confident of the benefit that was likely to result from it, than in his younger days. His friends and his party seldom thought of it.

During this period an important change had taken

[1] During the Westminster election of 1819, a sharp controversy arose with respect to the conduct of Mr. Fox. Mr. Hobhouse, the radical candidate, asserted that Mr. Fox had, in 1797, declared that he would never join an administration that would not pledge itself to bring in a plan for a radical reform in our system of representation; but that, in 1805, he forgot this declaration, and joined Lord Grenville's government without stipulation of any sort. The Whigs, more especially Mr. Lambton, angrily denied this story—the word *radical*, they said, if used by Mr. Fox, was applicable to the general system of the administration, and not to parliamentary reform.

place in the principles upon which the reformers themselves rested their demand for reform. When the question was argued by the Duke of Richmond, and during the discussions of '93 and the following years, the extreme or Radical reformers insisted that there was some inherent inalienable right possessed by every man to be himself individually represented; and they were driven into inconsistencies by their opponents, who asked, and very pertinently asked, why, if there were such a natural right, women, idiots, and children should be excluded from the constituency. When, however, after 1812, the question again became a topic of discussion, and the Radical reformers began to stir, the persons who at that time led them, more especially in the city of Westminster, adopted that exposition of principles on this subject which may be found stated with great precision as well as brevity by Mr. James Mill, the historian of British India, in the article 'Government' in the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* The whole doctrine of natural right was discarded, together with the principle of individual representation; and an extensive constituency was now demanded, because by this means alone, as the Radical reformers asserted, the interests of the people and their representatives could be made identical, and an honest as well as intelligent government obtained through representation. We shall find that Lord Grey, when in 1831 he explained his own principles with respect to reform, believed that he should be called upon to combat the doctrine

of individual representation with which he had been familiar in his youth.

Sir Francis Burdett, then representing what were called Radical opinions, and being in fact the leader of the Radical party, moved the House of Commons from time to time to adopt, as a plan of reform, universal suffrage, annual parliaments, and vote by ballot;[1] and Lord John Russell might be considered the exponent of Whig wishes and belief on the same matter, when he at this period, on various occasions, brought the subject for consideration before parliament.

The general opinion of the Whigs on the subject of reform may be taken to be expressed by Lord John Russell, when, on the 1st of July, 1819, he thus stated his own views:—'I agree in the propriety of disfranchising such boroughs as are notoriously corrupt, and I will give my consent to any measure that will restrict the duration of parliament to three years. I cannot, however, pledge myself to support a measure *that goes the length of proposing an inquiry into the general state of the representation, because such an inquiry is calculated to throw a slur upon the representation of the country*, and to fill the minds of the people with vague and indefinite alarms.' The precise plan of the noble Lord, and the extent of the change he contemplated, he gave to the world on the 14th of December of the same year (1819), when moving resolutions to the following effect:—

[1] See, for example, his motion on July 1, 1819, and the debate thereon.—*Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1440.

'I come now,' he said, 'to the resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose; the two first declare, that when a borough is convicted of gross and notorious bribery and corruption, it shall cease to send members to parliament, and that a great town or county shall enjoy the right it has forfeited. On these heads I have nothing to add. The third declares, 'that it is the duty of this House to consider of further means to detect and prevent corruption in the election of members of parliament.' . . . The last resolution declares the opinion of the House, 'that the borough of Grampound ought to be disfranchised.'[1] The terms of these resolutions prove that the noble lord, at the time, was not aware of the real nature of the difficulties which lay in the path of every reformer. He evidently did not understand the jealousies by which the subject was surrounded. But of the fears which beset the Whig party upon this matter, and upon this occasion, the words of Mr. Tierney gave significant evidence. The report says that 'Mr. Tierney declared that he never rose'—(and he rose after Lord Castlereagh)—'with more of the spirit of moderation, or with more of a disposition to harmony than he felt at that moment; and, in the

[1] The resolutions are set forth in full at p. 1106, vol. xli. *Hansard's Debates.* The words of the second resolution deserve remark: 'The right of returning members . . . . . so taken from any borough . . . . . should be given to some great towns, the population of which shall not be less than 15,000 souls, or to some of the largest counties.'

first place, he must thank his noble friend for the opportunity which he had afforded the House of unanimously and decidedly discountenancing the wild and visionary doctrines of reform which had lately agitated the country.' A talk was then indulged in, about some unfortunate boroughs which were said to be corrupt—meaning thereby, that the voters in them sold their votes for small sums of money—the great borough-proprietor, who sold his commanding interest for a large sum, not being accused of corruption, or threatened with disfranchisement. Lord John Russell withdrew his motion, and there was a general Whig gratulation, that the dangerous question was so quietly disposed of.

And in this, there was nothing to be wondered at. All the great Whig families had almost entirely seceded from the ranks of the reformers,[1] and they looked with great jealousy and suspicion upon all who based their pretensions to popular favour upon views of parliamentary reform. In the year 1819,

[1] Any one who will give himself the trouble to look carefully at the speeches of the several members of these powerful families, will find this assertion, to the very letter, accurate. The Cavendishes, with the Duke of Devonshire at their head—Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Milton, Lord Carlisle, Lord Morpeth, Lord Holland, the Duke of Norfolk, together with the men of ability who formed their intellectual *condottieri*—such as Burke, Sheridan, Tierney, Romilly, and others, never adopted reform as the chief topic of their discourse, or made it the chief object of their labours, except when driven by party necessities to employ what always to them appeared a most dangerous weapon of offence. Lord Grey, however, was still a reformer.

the famous contest occurred for the representation of Westminster, between Mr. (now Sir John) Hobhouse, on the Radical interest, and Mr. George Lamb, representing the Whig party. The Tory party looked on, and enjoyed the scene; and the bitter invectives of Mr. Hobhouse against the Whigs, as pretended reformers, were evidently exceedingly pleasing to those who hated reformers in every shape, whether they appeared as advocates of sweeping alterations, or friends of the little piecemeal changes, by which the Whig party sought to maintain themselves in popular estimation as sincere and really extensive reformers.[1]

The division between Reformers and Whigs grew every day more marked; the troubles of 1817-18-19 increasing their differences, until ill-will and anger arose, and the mutual recriminations of Whigs and Radicals became the common amusement of the Tory, or government party. And when the Whigs, under Mr. Canning, became themselves part of the government, their wishes for reform appeared to have entirely disappeared.

[1] These Whig pretensions to the character of reformers were at the time strenuously denied, and somewhat severely handled by one who is himself now a Whig—viz., by Sir J. C. Hobhouse. After his long and unsuccessful struggle for Westminster with Mr. George Lamb, the Whig candidate, a very elaborate history of the election was published by Mr. Hobhouse's authority—a great portion of the narrative, indeed, was actually his own composition. This angry performance very curiously illustrates the various and varying views of the Whig party respecting reform.—See *Authentic Narrative of the Events of the Westminster Election*, 1819.

Among the opponents of reform of late years, Mr. Canning had always been considered the most distinguished—and not only was he himself its steady opponent in whatever shape proposed—but the friends, whom he had collected into a party attached to himself personally, all earnestly joined in his vehement warfare against those who attempted any change in our representative system. When he died, his mantle fell upon a person of ability very inferior to his own, but still one of considerable power—viz., Mr. Huskisson, who, with the party called Mr. Canning's friends, were all well known as anti-reformers. The catholic question, during Mr. Canning's short career as prime minister, was the engrossing topic of consideration among all classes of politicians, and continued to be so till the year of emancipation—1829. The Whigs joined Mr. Canning in the hope of carrying, as they said, this emancipation by his aid, and in this hope they waived, for the time, discussion of all questions upon which a difference of opinion existed between themselves and their new ally. Among these questions they included parliamentary reform, wishing however to make the world believe that they still were, and ever had been sincere reformers. When, however, Mr. Canning died, and left their hopes still unfulfilled, and they lost office, rather by their own weakness than the strength of their opponents, they resumed the character of an opposition, recommenced their struggles; and, among other topics of discourse again chose reform. This discourse, however, was

again for a time silenced by the din and excitement raised by the passing of catholic emancipation by the Duke of Wellington, and was lulled into quiet by the pleasing hope of sharing with him the many sweets of office.[1] The end of the session of 1829 had not arrived before doubts obscured the brightness of these hopes, and symptoms of distrust began, faintly indeed at first, to develop themselves. The Tories, too,

---

[1] We may judge of the interest felt *in* the House of Commons by the petitions presented *to* it on this subject. When the Whigs really took up the question the petitions came in large numbers. Mr. Croker, in his anti-reform zeal, wishing to prove that the excitement of 1831 was only sudden and temporary, counted the petitions which had been presented to the House of Commons, and the following was the result: 'I find that in 1821, 19 petitions only were presented in favour of reform. In the year 1822 the number was reduced to 12. There were in

1823	29	1827	0
1824	0	1828	0
1825	0	1829	0
1826	0	1830	14

Such was the state of the public mind on this subject up to *that* date.'—See *Quarterly Review*, No. XC. July, 1831.

Sir Robert Peel, in the last debate on the English Reform Bill in the Commons, thus spoke of this apathy and gave this convincing proof of its existence: 'When I asked the noble lord (Althorp) how he could support Mr. Canning, who was the decided enemy of all reform—who refused even to permit the franchise of Grampound to go to Manchester, what was his answer? His answer was, that the people of England had become so indifferent to reform, that he never intended to bring the question forward again. I think this is sufficient to justify me for not having been very willing, a year or two subsequent to 1827, to open this important subject.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1832, p. 2464.

in their anger, like all other classes of politicians in that frame of mind, insisted upon the necessity of reform. The Whigs were thus placed in a perplexing position. Were the Tories fairly and with an appearance of sincerity to take up and support the demand for a change in the representation of the people, the vocation of the Whigs as popular leaders was gone; but if they (the Whigs) at once began to renew their endeavours on the subject, they might fatally offend the Duke of Wellington, and thus shut themselves out from all expectation of place. Wary and sagacious, they proceeded therefore by degrees. The younger members of their party proposed some small reforms, such as the East Retford and Penryn Disfranchisement Bills; which being insignificant, did not preclude an alliance with the administration, but served, nevertheless, the good party purposes of sowing dissension among the members of the cabinet, and keeping alive the opinion that the Whigs were real parliamentary reformers. The friends of Mr. Canning, forgetting in the autumn of 1827 the services rendered to their leader at the commencement of that year by the Whigs, deserted these lately found allies, when they discovered that to retain place and this new friendship was impossible. Lord Brougham in after years writing on this topic, expressed all the bitterness of Whig feeling at this proceeding in the following pungent statement:—

'Although Mr. Canning's hostility to reform had been the most often signalized, yet his death, in the

autumn of 1827, in no degree relaxed the opposition of his surviving followers, all of whom remained united on this point. They, no doubt, departed widely from his course in other respects, and they so far deserted the ground which he had latterly taken as even to join those with whom his hostility had become the most personal, evincing their habitual love of place, by holding office with the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, after their new Whig allies had been somewhat cavalierly ejected from office by the Court. Nor was it till the following summer that they received the reward due to such place-loving propensities, by being ejected as unceremoniously as the Whigs had been before. Lord Dudley and Mr. Huskisson, with the lesser members of the party, Lords Palmerston and Melbourne, and Glenelg, were once more in opposition, and gradually resumed the Whig connexion, but their hostility to reform remained unabated. Nor is it one of the least remarkable events in their history, that to a reform question they owed the last misfortune of losing their places in 1828. They had taken the long-headed, not to say crafty view of their new leader, Mr. Huskisson, that giving members to Birmingham, on the disfranchisement of Retford for corruption, would tend more to prevent further mischief—that is, as he explained it—really effectual reform, than merely opening the franchise to the adjoining hundreds.[1] On this, the Duke

[1] Lord Brougham here alludes to the following expressions used by Mr. Huskisson in 1829:—'Now what remains behind?

and Sir Robert Peel differed with them, possibly deeming it a poor stratagem, and conceiving it better to oppose reform altogether in a fair and manly way, than by means of a trick. On this the parties quarrelled, and when the general question of parliamentary reform was debated in 1830, the remains of the Canning party gave it their unmitigated opposition, as they continued to do, until being in office with Lord Grey, and other reformers, they all at once became, root and branch adversaries of the existing system, and wholesale proselytes to the reforming creed.'[1]

Parliamentary reform. I trust it will long remain behind. I hope that we shall always resist it firmly and strenuously. I am sure that if we adopt the proposition of my honourable friend the member for Bletchingly, the chance of our making a successful resistance to parliamentary reform will be increased; but that if we adopt the proposition of the honourable member for the county of Hertford, we shall see parliamentary reform—backed by a powerful auxiliary out of the House, I mean public opinion—made an annual and formidable question of discussion.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1829, p. 1450. Lord Howick in 1830 remarked on this—'I feel no difficulty in understanding the right honourable gentleman. He has made an admission for which I thank him. * * * Individuals who think as the right honourable gentleman does, are willing to give up some of the outworks of corruption, in order that they may be the better enabled to defend the principal stronghold.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 127.

[1] *Lord Brougham's Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 546. This passage was written in 1838, after Lord Brougham's quarrel with his old friends, but the old feeling dictated every word. Lord Melbourne indeed considered himself incorrectly described when called one 'of the lesser members' of Mr. Canning's party—asserting that he never was a Canningite at all! In his

Early in the session of 1830, the Marquis of Blandford, incited by his anger against the Duke of Wellington, proposed a scheme of reform. Before this general proposition was discussed the scheme of partial reform, which during the preceding session had so often occupied the attention of parliament, was again made a topic of debate on the motion of Mr. Calvert, on February 11, for leave to bring in a bill to prevent bribery and corruption in the borough of East Retford. Mr. Tennyson again moved as an amendment, to leave out all the words after the word 'bill,' in order to insert these words—'to exclude the borough of East Retford from electing burgesses to serve in parliament, and to enable the town of Birmingham to return two representatives in lieu thereof.' The effect of the constant discussion which had for some years been going on, was now seen in the increased anxiety of the more sagacious—the more 'long-headed and crafty,' as Lord Brougham calls them, of the enemies of reform, that some scheme of partial reform should be adopted, in order, as Mr. Huskisson acknowledged, 'to guard against the growing danger of sweeping reform on principles too abstract and general.' He confessed, reluctantly, as he said, that there was a general and profound feeling in the minds of men, not of the ignorant and uninformed

character of Mr. Canning, Lord Brougham again remarks upon 'the disgusting rottenness of the friendship professed to Mr. Canning by these puny men of whose nostrils he had been the breath.'—See page 279, *First Series of Characters.* Note.

rabble, but of men of education and intellect, as competent as members of the House itself to form a sound and judicious opinion upon the circumstances of the empire,—and in these men there was an unsettled and disquieted state of mind, and a feeling that the House of Commons was not what it ought to be.' In this roundabout phrase, he wished to say, that generally men of education thought that a reform was needed—and he was right; such was the prevalent opinion, and a few months sufficed to show how strong, at length, this opinion had become. Looking, he said, to the concessions which had already been made, he asked if it was creditable to the legislature to make concessions always when prudence and necessity compelled them no longer to withhold them; and he expressed a hope that the government, in this case, would be disposed to reconsider the question; and, in short, take his advice, which was to grant an unimportant, unmeaning change, in the hope of blinding and hoodwinking the people; and he endeavoured to frighten the administration by a description of the proceedings and character of the Birmingham Political Union—a body destined eventually to exercise no small influence upon the determinations of the legislature. 'I saw at Birmingham, lately, an association which, as far as I can perceive its elements, principles, and operations, seems exactly formed on the model of the Catholic Association; for it has its subscriptions, its funds, its meetings, its discussions, and its great agitator; and the purpose of this association is to raise a universal

cry for parliamentary reform.' He would rather, he said, with much practical wisdom, see the great Birmingham agitator in parliament, as he saw Mr. O'Connell, than at the head of the Birmingham Political Union; and he sought to persuade the House to give Birmingham the means of sending him to parliament, in order to prevent a more extensive change. This advice was worthy of the crafty official, but was happily not taken. Mr. Huskisson further gave a hint, which his sudden death shortly after prevented his fulfilling—that if this proposition was successfully resisted, he should feel himself at liberty to change his tactics, and take up what he called a new defensive position. Judging from the after-conduct of his friends, we may assume that this meant, that he would support a very searching and sweeping change in the system of representation. To this significant speech, Mr. Goulbourn, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the part of the government, made an unmeaning reply, from which all that could be gathered was, that the government intended to oppose Mr. Tennyson's amendment, and that he was himself very much shocked by Mr. Huskisson's language. This did not surprise, or indeed in any way affect any of his hearers—all men knew that he spoke at the word of command, and that he would have voted either way, just as his leader ordered, having neither the ability nor the desire to form an independent opinion. Mr. Charles Grant merely repeated Mr. Huskisson's argument, saying—'If we refuse this now, we shall be

obliged to grant it hereafter, as we have in other instances, with, on our part, little of the grace of concession, and with little of gratitude on the part of those to whom it shall be made.'[1]

Lord Howick had, early in the debate, expressed his own peculiar views on the subject, to which after-events gave an interest, his opinions appearing to have been shared by his father, Lord Grey, and by him put into practice in the great reform which took place during his administration. He (Lord Howick) lamented that, by the forms of the House, he was prevented moving certain resolutions which he had prepared, and which he read, the last and most important of which was to the following effect:—

'That this House, therefore, finding that the passing of specific bills directed against particular cases, has neither had the effect of removing the existence or arresting the progress of corruption, is of opinion that its character may best be vindicated by abandoning these useless and expensive proceedings, in order to adopt some general and comprehensive measure, the only means of checking so scandalous an abuse.'

In supporting this proposition, Lord Howick by anticipation thus remarked on the opinions and conduct of Mr. Huskisson and his party:—

'I very much fear that the motives of many of those who support this measure of disfranchisement,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 131.

are not at first sight what they appear to be. I believe it is not the crime of bribery which excites their indignation, but the clumsiness with which it has been effected. They do not wish to put an end to those abuses, but to keep them from the public eye, and to conceal from the light of day their own crimes.' And he afterwards most truly remarked, 'that it argued contemptible folly and weakness to attempt to deceive the country by such barefaced hypocrisy, as cannot impose upon the merest child.'[1] Mr. O'Connell did not acquiesce in the propriety of the course recommended by the noble lord, although he fully admitted the justice of his remarks. He would kill, he said, one wolf of a hungry pack, rather than not kill any. His illustration, however, was not accurately put. To meet Lord Howick's argument, he should have supposed that the killing this one wolf might have tended to secure the escape of the remaining pack. This was what Lord Howick asserted, and added further, and herein he agreed in the opinion of Mr. Huskisson, that by abstaining from the sacrifice of one delinquent, they would lead eventually to the extirpation of the whole body. Mr. Huskisson, not desiring this wholesale reform, voted for the motion of Mr. Tennyson. Lord Howick, who desired the more extensive measure, opposed it. The result showed the correctness of this view.

Sir Robert Peel, with an astonishing confidence,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 127.

denied the truth of the noble lord's accusation. He insisted, much to the edification and amusement of the House, on the virtue of the borough constituencies. —'I cannot agree,' he said, indulging in very dangerous joking, 'with the noble lord in the declaration of general bribery and corruption among the cities and boroughs; I cannot bring myself to include in such an accusation the borough of Westbury, which I have the honour to represent.' This excited a laugh at the moment, and was received as wit, coming from the leader of the House. But serious men out of doors, who saw their welfare dependent upon the will and determinations of a House of Commons, over whom they could exercise no control, looked upon this joking as insolent and offensive—unworthy of the person who attempted it, and unbefitting the occasion which called it forth.[1] He declared that he should support Mr. Calvert's original motion, but added, that if the House adopted the amendment, it would not be vexatiously opposed in the House of Peers. Mr. Tennyson's amendment was lost—the numbers being—

For the original motion . . .	126
For the amendment	99
Majority	27[2]

[1] 'Serious patriots groan,' said Gibbon, with his accustomed grave irony, and speaking of the once celebrated pamphlet *Anticipation*,—'serious patriots groan to see such things turned to farce.'

[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 135.

A second division occurred on the bill itself, which was carried by a yet larger majority—the numbers being—

For the bill	154
Against it	55
Majority	99[1]

When, on the 18th of the same month (February) the Marquis of Blandford proposed a larger, though certainly not a very well conceived plan of parliamentary reform, the Whigs held aloof, contenting themselves with vague expressions in favour of a change, but suggesting that the proper time for proposing it had not arrived—neither was the present proposal the right one. Into any explanation of the noble lord's plan there is no need now to enter—he was himself hardly serious. The motion was made in anger, the object sought being to annoy and perplex the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. A favourable opportunity was given for declamation and abuse; and while talking about a reform in parliament, Lord Blandford was in reality exhaling the violent passion which had possessed him in consequence of the emancipation of the catholics. The supposed liberal parliamentary reformer was, in fact, merely an anti-catholic bigot.

The resolution proposed by him was, 'that leave be given to bring in a bill to restore the constitutional influence of the Commons in the parliament

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 135.

of England.' The policy and feelings of the Whig opposition were made manifest by an amendment proposed by Lord Althorp, who said, 'I will vote for the motion of my noble relation, if it be pressed to a division; but agreeing with my honourable and learned friend (Mr. Brougham) that the better course to adopt will be to move a general resolution by way of amendment, I beg to propose that all the words after the word 'that' be omitted, in order to insert the following: 'It is the opinion of this House that a reform in the state of the representation is expedient.' By this the party was really pledged to nothing—the nature and extent of the reform needed were not expressed—the proposition might mean the most searching, it might also intend the most insignificant reform. To reform in this general sense, the whole party had for many years been pledged, but hitherto they had abstained from declaring the *utmost* limits of the change they contemplated. Probably, indeed, no one of the party had yet settled, or even attempted to settle, for himself what that limit was. The leaving the whole matter thus in uncertainty was, for all party purposes, the safest and most effective course. Ardent and sanguine reformers would think that a real and sweeping change was intended—timid and wavering supporters would suppose that a vague phrase was employed because little was really meant; so also, as times changed and necessities varied, plans for reform might and would change too; and the actual moment

at which the reform was to be proposed, must by the attendant circumstances be decided. The hopes and wishes of the people—the precise end in view—the means at hand—all these and a thousand surrounding considerations, must determine the extent and nature of the proposal. Sagacious party politicians, like the Whigs, were not willing unnecessarily to commit themselves, or to miss employing so safe and so useful an instrument as a vague and general proposition.

The numbers on the main question of leave to bring in the bill were—

Ayes	57
Noes	160[1]

So it passed in the negative.

The real party move respecting reform was made by Lord John Russell, who, on the 23rd of February, asked for leave to bring in a bill 'to enable the towns of Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham to return representatives to serve in parliament.'[2] A more harmless change cannot be conceived—and while harmless, it had every appearance of fairness and reasonableness. Half-a-dozen members, even if elected by universal suffrage, would not have changed the real character of the House. The landed interests would have still been undoubtedly dominant. The votes of

[1] Lord Althorp stated in the House of Commons, on a subsequent debate, that by agreement it was settled not to call for a division on the amendment, which was put and negatived *pro formâ*: the division was on the main question.

[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 361, *et seq.*

Gatton would alone have neutralized those of Birmingham, and the majority would still have obeyed the commands of the small number of proprietors, who really returned the House of Commons. While the reality was thus to be unchanged, an appearance of fairness would have been gained of infinite service to the possessors of this mighty monopoly. They would on all occasions have been able to point to these popular representatives when any attack was made on the composition of the House. 'Who can say,' they would have triumphantly asked, 'that the large towns are not represented—look at London, at Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol.' If to these Glasgow and Sheffield had been added, this question would have proved a serious and lasting obstacle in the path of all succeeding reformers. Fortunately, the opponents of reform were short-sighted and timid. They feared the proposal, because it was a change. Any alteration they dreaded, because thereby the *prestige* of an unalterable, inviolable nature would no longer have attended on the House of Commons. 'Once begin,' they exclaimed, 'and we do not know when there will be a stop!' The medley of reasons for opposing the motion was curious and instructive. Lord Sandon opposed it by moving an amendment in the words of the resolution brought forward by Lord John Russell himself in a previous year, and by which it was proposed to transfer the franchise from places convicted of bribery and corruption to certain large towns. This plan had been many times proposed,

and had as often been defeated either in the House of Commons or Lords. Lord Sandon, and apparently on that account, moved once again to adopt it. He objected to the present plan of Lord J. Russell, because it had no defined limit: 'If you give the franchise to Leeds because of its populousness, why not also to Sheffield, which is already more populous?—why not to any other town which may hereafter become so? But if you still go on, you will increase the numbers of the House of Commons, already too great.' He therefore proposed the oft-defeated plan of exchange. Mr. Twiss opposed both the original motion and the amendment, because he considered them both an infringement of the acts of union with Scotland and Ireland. Lord Valletort opposed the motion of Lord John Russell, because he saw that noble lord's name in the minority on Lord Blandford's motion. In such a case he judged of measures by the men who proposed them. Sir George Murray was determined to give his vote against the plan, spite of his having admitted the catholics, and spite of his willingness to transfer the franchise from corrupt to incorrupt places, first because he did not like increasing the numbers of the House, and next because he was afraid of introducing a demagogue influence which might sway their determinations. Mr. Wynn feared increasing indefinitely the numbers of the members, and considered that if there was anything sacred in the union with Ireland, it was that the proportion of representatives then established should be maintained in favour of the weaker

party. He therefore opposed the original motion. It would, he said, 'totally change the character of its representation, (viz., of the House,) and would render it more tumultuous, and less adapted for business than it is now."[1] Mr. Secretary Peel remarked, that although he had been so many years in parliament, this was the first occasion on which he had expressed in words an opinion on parliamentary reform. With that fatal perversity which has marked his whole political career, he chose this moment as the most opportune for the declaration of a sweeping, uncompromising opposition to change of every sort, degree, nature, or extent. Just when all thinking men clearly perceived that some change must take place, he determined to express for the first time his opposition to every reform, and to use in this his declaration such a form of expression as precluded the possibility of any modification—of any retreat, any compromise. There would seem to be something morbid in the right honourable gentleman's temperament—some strange twist or peculiarity which enables him to derive pleasure from the contemplation of a dogged resistance. In most instances the contemplation is all the pleasure he enjoys—for there is a weakness and want of stubbornness in his temper, which usually deprives him of the actual fruition of a pleasure which at a distance seems so alluring. His resolution breaks down and yields just at that point when, with all other men,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 368.

any expectation of surrender would not only be deemed hopeless, but absolutely insulting. A change such as that proposed required not of necessity any disquisition on the general question of reform. The proposal might well have been discussed upon its own individual merits. It might have been opposed or supported by a friend of radical reform. Being thus exceptional in its character, any confession of faith on the general question was going out of the way in search of difficulties, and proved, on the part of him who made it, want of prudence or want of foresight. After what had occurred, however, on the catholic question, suspicion as to his sincerity was natural in the minds of conservative politicians, and had to be guarded against. The language of the opposition not seldom tended to excite and keep alive doubt respecting the intentions of the right honourable gentleman. To relieve the minds of his friends of these doubts, it was necessary, he seemed to think, for him to separate himself in some marked manner from the Whigs, by whom he had been supported in his late great reformation. The sweeping declarations now employed by him appear to have been used for this purpose, and were suggested apparently by a speech delivered by Dr. Lushington, in which an appeal was made to the patriotism of the Secretary of State, and something like a hope expressed that he might in this case also prove the great reformer. The appeal of the learned civilian was direct and emphatic. He said—

'Sir, without meaning any degree of hostility to

the right honourable gentleman opposite, but on the contrary, feeling, as I always do, infinitely grateful for all the services he has rendered, I must again contend that a heavy pressure of distress has come upon the country, and that measures infinitely wider in their extent, and more severe in their operation than he has ever undertaken, must be speedily adopted. If the right honourable gentleman means to discharge his duty—if he means to assume that which is the boast of every Englishman, the maintenance of his own rights,—he must appeal to the well-educated, well-informed, the moral people of this country to support him in his necessity. Let him, as he boasts of having divested himself of ancient prejudices, look truth in the face, and, disregarding all other considerations, make the good of his country the sole guide of his actions; he will then maintain his place in his Majesty's government with infinite satisfaction and advantage to the people, and with glory to himself: and amidst all the difficulties that may come upon him, he may rely with perfect safety and confidence that the people will bear him through, and support him against all the efforts of disappointed corruption or iniquitous ambition. Thus he will have the double blessing of enjoying a safe conscience, with the certainty that he is occupied in security in producing inestimable good to that land over whose destiny the functions of his office exercise so presiding an influence."[1] To this significant appeal Mr. Peel thus replied—

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 367.

'When the honourable and learned civilian exhorts the government to pursue rigidly and perseveringly that course which will attract the popular applause, and adds that it is thus that a minister may obtain the most flattering eminence, and best promote the interests of the country,—provided he do not suffer himself to be led away by any of those temptations proper to his office,—I cannot but remember that there is one other temptation to be avoided—namely, that of deferring too much to popular opinion. There is a medium to be observed, and I believe that medium course to be the best. A minister should neither make himself the tool of party, nor should he, by courting popular applause, too much lose sight of the interests of the country. He may thus, it is true, forfeit, for a moment, the good opinion of the people, but he will still enjoy the approbation of his own conscience, and probably attain that permanent good fame which is the result of adhering to an upright and steady course.'[1]

The right honourable secretary was evidently thinking and speaking of himself. The words 'good opinion of the people,' meant that 'of his party,' and were spoken *at* his friends. The solemn homily on the danger of seeking popular applause, and the ready employment of the incident furnished by the debate, in subservience of his own personal ends, is an instance of that ostentatious dexterity, that trans-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 374.

parent artifice, for which the right honourable gentleman has gained an unenviable renown. No one is really persuaded or misled by it; but it alarms the prudent, and offends the honest.

Mr. Brougham closed the debate by a speech of great power, and of admirable temper. He answered without asperity the objections raised to reform in general, and to the proposed plan of Lord John Russell in particular. He set forth, in temperate and well guarded phrase, the benefits which he hoped to derive from parliamentary reform:—

'Those who are for parliamentary reform hope to see, not these institutions (*i.e.* King, Lords, and Commons) attacked, but the influence of the people, which is a beneficial influence, continued and augmented; whereas it is now only exerted by spirts, and accidentally. They wish to see the machine of government better regulated than at present—to substitute influence for force, love for fear, confidence for distrust; they wish to see all these latter things rendered nugatory and needless by a truly popular representation. By this we shall confirm the stability of existing institutions, not weaken the popular attachment to them. * * * Do I mean to deny that public opinion finds its way within these walls—that popular feelings reach the House of Commons? No. I should be the very last man to dispute it; but my complaint and objection is, that public opinion and popular feeling are a long time in finding their way hither; but if we had a reform in parliament, they

would come directly. We should not then have to wait years and years till an abuse had been undermined—till the point was carried by sap, instead of by storm.'[1] And he illustrated this last remark by referring to the conduct of parliament on a subject which he described as the greatest disgrace to the legislature—namely, the African slave trade.

Whether based on correct reasoning, or on specific advantage to be derived from the present proposal, all appeal to the House was on the occasion equally vain: Lord John Russell's motion was rejected. The numbers on division being,

For the motion	140
Against it	188
Majority . . .	48

The intentions of the Whig party at that period, and the undefined nature of their opinions respecting reform in parliament, more distinctly appeared on the motion of Mr. O'Connell, made on the 28th of May, for leave to bring in a bill 'for the effectual radical reform of abuses in the representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament.' He introduced this motion in a speech that was remarkable only because it was exceedingly guarded, mild, and temperate in phrase. The arguments set forth were of a common-place character. They were not well put—so that neither by its substance nor its

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 376.

manner was the speech framed to excite attention and arouse a spirit in favour of reform, either in doors or out. The direct proposals of the speech, which were to be embodied in the bill, were—first, to limit the duration of parliament to three years—second, to extend the suffrage, so as to make it what is usually called universal. 'I propose,' said the learned gentleman, 'that every man who is unstained with crime, of mental capacity, and of legal age, should have the right of voting. In other words, I propose universal suffrage;'—and thirdly, in order to protect the independence of the voter, he proposed to adopt the ballot.

Lord John Russell upon this moved an amendment, because he was unwilling to give the motion a direct negative, and thus vote against all reform; and because he was not prepared by an affirmative vote to sanction opinions which in reality he disapproved. The amendment consisted of a string of resolutions, which he had, in fact, already submitted to the House, but which he now again adopted, as they gave him an effective means of rescuing himself and his party from a position which he and they found disagreeable. The last resolution was remarkable, showing how little in reality of principle there was in the motives which determined the conduct of the noble lord, or of the party whom he on this occasion represented. To triennial parliaments the noble lord had no particular objection; but being a Whig, he had no great desire to throw a slur upon

the septennial act. 'If the learned member had confined his measure to his first proposition,' he said, 'viz. that of triennial parliaments, though I do not approve entirely of it, and believe that parliaments elected for five years would be preferable to them, as well as to our present system, yet I do not think I should be led to oppose him on that point alone. But universal suffrage and vote by ballot are measures that in my opinion are totally incompatible with the constitution of England.' His own plan certainly was not calculated in any way to disturb the existing order of things; but was, on the contrary, so framed as efficiently to promote the continuance of the system he professed to condemn. The first of his resolutions declared, 'That it is expedient to extend the basis of the representation of the people in this House;'—so vague as to be really unmeaning: nothing could be more harmless than this idle assertion. By the next resolution he proceeded in some measure to explain what was meant by extending the basis of representation. It was to this effect: 'That it is expedient to give members to large unrepresented towns, and additional members to counties of greatest wealth and population.' Upon this proposal, the noble lord observed:

'The additional members I have proposed would make a large addition to the numbers in this House. In order to get rid of the objection to that addition, and to obviate the inconvenience which would arise from it, I should propose that a certain number of

smaller boroughs should only send one representative instead of two to Parliament; and that any boroughs with less than 2500 inhabitants should only send one member. I trust that will not be considered a grievance, particularly after the resolution I shall propose relative to this subject. My third resolution accordingly is, 'That in order to attain this object without inconvenience it is expedient that a number of smaller boroughs, not exceeding sixty, and not containing more than 2500 inhabitants each, should for the future return only one member to serve in parliament.'[1]

Then came his last resolution, borrowed from the plan of Mr. Pitt, but which, coming from a professed constitutional reformer of modern days, is somewhat startling. It proposed, 'That it is expedient that compensation should be granted to the boroughs which shall lose their right of returning two members to parliament, by means of a fixed sum to be applied to that purpose annually for several years'!

The remainder of the noble lord's speech consisted of remarks in answer to an observation made by Sir R. Peel on a previous evening, that the House of Commons was now purer and less corrupt than it was in the days of our forefathers—'that we are,' he had observed, 'neither so corrupt nor so profligate as they were in the reigns of George I. and George II.' The noble lord was at pains to prove this assertion

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. ii. p. 2054.

incorrect—sneering at the same time, with laboured irony, at the present purity of the House of Commons. At the moment the words of the noble lord fell on inattentive ears. But the speech that had died in the uttering, but for the record of the reporter, came in after times to be remembered, and the principles it enunciated to be compared with those which seemed to have governed the conduct of the noble speaker himself. And we have lived to regret those days, when the corrupt conduct of the House of Commons formed a subject for the indignation of the noble reformer, and supplied him with an argument in favour of change. The corruption of those times when he was in opposition, would now, nineteen years later,[1] and after a much wider reform has been effected than that which the noble lord then proposed, be considered evidence of exalted purity, and accepted with joyful gratitude, and lauded as a most unexpected and searching economy. The words are indeed worthy of being repeated.

'It may be said, perhaps, that the times to which I have referred, were times of great opposition to ministers; but I can support my argument by going into the corrupt times of Sir Robert Walpole. In the first parliament of George II., everything is said to have been most corrupt and profligate. Now in the year 1730 we shall see the course that parliament adopted. The army then cost 651,000*l.*;

[1] This was written in 1849.

and the forces in our colonies and plantations 160,000*l.*; and let it not be supposed, Sir, that at the time we had no colonies to defend. On the contrary, New York, Carolina, Bermuda and Jamaica, were then in our possession, and required vigilant guardianship to preserve them. So far from that sum being now sufficient to defend our colonial possessions, it is little more than sufficient to keep the Ionian Islands, which are maintained for us at an expenditure that they are scarcely worth. Our vote in the year 1830 is a very different one, for we now vote for the army alone about 7,300,000*l.* In the year 1729 the whole of the supplies for the defensive establishment voted, when we had subsidies to pay to foreign powers, amounted to 3,600,000*l.*; and in 1829, when we were not under similar disadvantages, the supplies amounted to 17,620,000*l.* The facts which I have stated, I conceive prove that the parliament of that day was at all events the faithful guardian of the public purse; and that although the members of it might be pensioners and place-holders, they acted more faithfully in watching over and guarding the expenditure of the public money, than we do at present. Indeed, Sir, I think I have shown pretty well, that much as we boast of the times in which we live, yet, as faithful guardians of the public purse, we are not entitled to all the praise we so abundantly claim for ourselves.'[1]

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2053.

On this striking, this overwhelming proof of corruption, the noble lord rested his demand for a reform in the constitution of parliament, professing to believe himself, and endeavouring to convince his hearers, that the change he proposed would remedy the evil of which he complained, by destroying the corruption which he had thus proved to exist.

Of the speakers who succeeded and took part in the debate, few agreed with each other except in condemning what they called the sweeping proposal of Mr. O'Connell. Mr. Stuart Wortley was so startled by the mere idea of universal suffrage, that his mind for the time could apply itself to no other topic. To it he declared himself irreconcileably a foe, because he believed that property, as well as persons, ought to be represented. For this opinion he quoted as authority Mr. Madison; and in illustration of the advantage resulting from this representation of property, he made an assertion which, if correct, might have been employed as an argument against himself, by those of the Tory party, who from anger had been lately converted to the creed of the reformers. 'Parliament,' he said, 'had but done its duty on several occasions in our past history, when it dissented from the popular voice, and disowned the popular control.' Two instances of this fortunate resistance to public opinion he cited; one was the Revolution of 1688, the other the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill. Speaking of the last, he put this significant question:

'Who that knows anything of this country can doubt that if it [universal suffrage] had existed last year, we should have not had the pleasure of hearing the honourable and learned member for Clare uttering his opinions on this occasion; for if the votes of the people had been numerically taken, although some few members might, from other local and personal considerations, have voted for them, and yet have retained the seats they now enjoy by popular election, the majority would unquestionably have been against the measures adopted by parliament.'[1] This is a dangerous argument at all times, but was peculiarly imprudent on the present occasion, when the great anti-catholic party were smarting under a defeat, and were turning their thoughts towards a change in the constitution of the House of Commons as a means of regaining their lost power, and thus saving the protestant establishment from imminent destruction.

The chief of the aristocratic Whigs, Lord Althorp, was less violently opposed, however, than his followers and friends seemed to be to the plan now proposed. He agreed with Mr. O'Connell in approving triennial parliaments, and also the vote by ballot; but to universal suffrage he was as strenuously opposed as the most timid of his associates. Of the ballot he spoke in terms that must have annoyed some of those friends, and which were cer-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2056.

tainly in after times unpleasantly remembered. 'I still, after every consideration I can give the subject, am of the opinion I have already expressed, viz., that election by ballot would greatly diminish the expense of elections; that it would do away with improper influence upon the electors; and that it would allow them to give their votes as they pleased, subject of course to the action of popularity, and of the ties of feeling and affection.'[1] But universal suffrage he opposed, because it was, in his opinion, not in accordance with the principles of the constitution, which required that all classes should be represented. Universal suffrage, however, he considered gave the whole representation to one class alone. What class this was, or how it was distinguished, how ascertained, he left wholly unexplained; satisfying himself, and apparently those who heard him, by this oracular declaration. Respecting Lord John Russell's amendment, he said nothing: as the leader of the Whigs he apparently considered his safest and most politic course was to say no more than was absolutely necessary. All that was now required, was an explanation of his vote against Mr. O'Connell's proposal, which should preserve for himself the character of a reformer, while voting against a plan of reform. This advantage was obtained by speaking against Mr. O'Connell's, and voting for Lord John Russell's motion.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2056.

The remaining portion of the debate was in some degree remarkable, as being the occasion for the maiden speech of Mr. Smith O'Brien, who came forward in defence of the rotten boroughs, and the purity and excellence of the English constitution. Referring at the same time to the practical difficulties of the ministers, he declared: 'That it is indisputable that no administration could bear up against a system which would oppose to them a constant scene of factious riots, and democratic violence and combination, where the best test of integrity would be held to be opposition to the minister for the time being.' An opinion of which the speaker afterwards tested the correctness, by following the very course he now reprobated; but found it, unfortunately for himself, not so efficacious as he at this period believed, and subsequently hoped.

The debate was at length enlivened by a tirade from Mr. Hobhouse, the member for Westminster, which Mr. Brougham afterwards described 'as a speech, an abler than which I never had the satisfaction of hearing.' And yet this very able display was an open blustering and even coarse attack upon the party of the learned gentleman himself, and upon Mr. Fox in particular. Mr. Hobhouse succeeded, however, in adding another element of confusion to the debate, and thus rendering still more evident the unsettled state of opinion among reformers. He agreed apparently with nobody, certainly not with himself; but at last, reluctantly it seemed, determined

to support the motion of Mr. O'Connell. Sir Robert Peel[1] opposed both resolutions, betraying no particular feeling about the matter, but treating it simply as one of the ordinary displays of ordinary opposition. Out of doors, every body acknowledged there was no excitement respecting it; but each accounted for this apathy in a different manner: the one party saying it arose from real indifference, the other that it was caused by utter despair. The people, it was said, had no hope of obtaining reform from a corrupt House of Commons.

Mr. Brougham closed the debate, as far as the Whigs were concerned, by a discussion upon the merits of the ballot, saying, he was not wholly decided, but nevertheless strongly inclined to oppose the addition of any such means of protection. The speech was rather an after-dinner prolusion, intended to amuse the House, which it did effectually; but was little calculated to satisfy sincere and anxious inquirers into the real value of this now much praised, much abused mode of voting. The discussions to which we have been accustomed of late years upon this interesting subject, have taught us to disregard the flimsy and off-hand arguments with which the House was at that time satisfied.

Mr. O'Connell, in his reply, complained of the proceeding by which his plain straight-forward proposi-

[1] Mr. had now become Sir Robert Peel, his father having died on the 4th of May of this year, 1830, at the reverend age of eighty.

tion respecting reform had been met by the Whig party. He spoke of it as an unhandsome manœuvre which created a suspicion in men's minds as to the sincerity of Whig professions on the subject of parliamentary reform. 'A bye-battle—a side-way discussion,' had been got up, he said, in order to avoid the manly negative with which it ought to have been met. In this complaint there was much of truth. The discussion was inconvenient at the moment for the Whig opposition. They were unwilling yet to give up all hopes of office in alliance with the Duke of Wellington. The king was known to be dangerously ill—his immediate death indeed was expected, on which they hoped (the king's personal objections to Mr. Brougham being no longer in the way) that the duke would frankly join those by whose aid he was retained in office. At all events they desired, before open hostility was formally declared, to ascertain whether the reluctance shown by the duke to ally himself to their party arose from the king's dislike or his own — whether, in fact, the king's antipathies were not made a pretence by which the minister was enabled to hide, yet pursue his own desires. The Whigs, therefore, employed the resolutions of Lord John Russell as a means by which they might avoid a direct rupture with the administration, and still preserve the character of reformers. These resolutions did not prevent their adopting, at an after period, if they should think fit, any, even the widest measure of parliamentary reform. Mr. O'Connell,

however, divided the House on his motion, when the numbers were—

For the motion	13
Against it	319
Majority . . .	306

On Lord John Russell's motion, upon which a division immediately followed, the numbers showed more directly the opposition strength. There being,

For it	117
Against	213
Majority . . .	96

With this motion the struggle on the great question of parliamentary reform ceased for the present.

The proceedings in the House of Lords respecting the bill for the disfranchisement of East Retford, have no interest for posterity except in their result, which may be summed up in the words of Lord John Russell, who, moving on the last business day of the session, July 22, in the Commons, for an account of the total expenses incurred in the course of proceedings in the Lords upon the East Retford Bill during the present session, said — 'I have been informed that these expenses amount to no less a sum than 10,000*l.* This, and the manner in which the East Retford Bill has been conducted in the House of Lords, will form a good argument in a future session of Parliament for the adoption of some better mode than the present for

the correction of corrupt boroughs.'[1] The bill which after great opposition on the part particularly of Lord Durham had passed the Lords, converted, as Lord Durham truly said, a rotten into a close borough—that is, a borough which hitherto had been a thing purchaseable in the market open to all bidders, was now made the property of certain owners of land in the hundred in which the borough was situate. In the one case, it might be considered to represent the wealthy class generally; but in the other, only that portion of wealth represented by land; Lord Durham, whom we shall find an active parliamentary reformer in Lord Grey's cabinet, declared that he much preferred a rotten to a close borough. There seems, however, no very great reason for preferring the one to the other. In both cases, wealth would, in the lapse of years, be represented. The caprice of the owner of the land might confer the seat on a man of ability; so, by accident, money might procure it for one equally gifted. Mr. Brougham might, by the favour of the Duke of Devonshire, represent Knaresborough; Mr. Ricardo might, with his own money, purchase Bletchingly; or Sir Robert Peel, Westbury, and represent himself. These cases were, however, exceptions. The majority of such seats, whether they were what was called rotten or close boroughs, represented the narrow interests of mere wealth in place of those general interests which belonged to the whole

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2969.

people. The East Retford Disfranchisement Bill, was an idle expensive farce,[1] which had often been played with impunity, but which, by a series of lucky accidents, was played once too often, happening, as it did, just at a time when the public mind was prepared to put the true interpretation on the proceeding, and to make it an argument in favour of a change. The glaring folly and iniquity of the whole proceeding became thus an efficient instrument of good.

One other incident connected with the representation of the people contributed in some measure, though perhaps but slightly, to the same end. An attempt was made during this session to remove the civil disabilities of the Jews, and failed. The arguments, if arguments they can be called, employed against this attempt to get rid of this almost sole remnant of religious bigotry and exclusion connected with the representation of the people, were worthy of the folly which they were employed to defend. Mr.

---

[1] 'Why, my lords,' said Lord Grey on July 19, 'is it not notorious at the moment that we are affecting all this purity with respect to this borough, some of whose burgesses are said to have received forty guineas, that there are peers in this House avowedly receiving 1200*l.* or 1800*l.* a year from the representatives of boroughs, who have positively purchased the right to a seat in parliament in the representation of places under their immediate influence? Then, I say, do not be cajoled by this hypocrisy any longer.' The noble lord spoke the truth, but to do so on the present occasion required courage as well as honesty.

Brougham had, indeed, on a previous occasion, stated that he would advertise for an argument against the admission asked for, but did not state the price which he was willing to give for this precious commodity. He nevertheless had the pleasure for nothing of hearing a novel, if not a very valuable reason given for continued exclusion—one honourable member declaring he would exclude the Jews because they were descended from the persons who crucified our Saviour! It is grievous to find Sir Robert Peel arguing and voting in the company of such reasoners. On this question, however, as on so many others, he has seen reason to change his opinion, and the courage to avow the change.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE DEATH OF GEORGE IV., JUNE, 1830, TO THE END OF THE SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, 23RD JULY.

ACCESSION OF WILLIAM IV.

ON the 26th of June, 1830, in the middle of the session, died the king, George IV. All business was immediately interrupted, and much labour was lost. The parliament itself expired by law six months after the demise of the Crown, so that all men began at once to look forward to and prepare for the general election, which was now inevitable. Great interests were at stake. On the result of the approaching contests would depend the chance of a peaceful reform in our institutions, and on that, perhaps, the repose and happiness of the empire at large for many succeeding years. That the people should be more than usually anxious respecting the elections surprised no one who could perceive the threatening aspect of the whole political horizon.

That personal antipathy of George IV. to Mr. Brougham, to which allusion has already been so often made, could now no longer be employed by the Duke of Wellington—(if employed it ever had been) — to explain his continued reluctance

to ally himself with the Whig party. The truth probably is, however, that the Whigs who found themselves daily gliding further from power, and the distance between themselves and the Duke hourly increasing, involuntarily deceived themselves, and would fain have believed that the cause of this estrangement was accidental and temporary, originating with the king, not the Duke. The king was known to hate Mr. Brougham, and was generally believed to be what most princes are, implacable in his resentment. A vain and pampered voluptuary, whose ears were daily filled with fulsome flattery and words of slavish submission, he must have shrunk as from a burning iron when branded by the fiery indignation of the excited orator as a cruel and cowardly despot. That no time would heal this wound—that no after conduct would obliterate the recollection of it—every one felt and acknowledged—and that the memory of the injury in the mind of the king was an obstacle in the way of any minister of George IV. who might desire to associate Mr. Brougham with himself in office, no one could for a moment doubt. But it was not so clear that this was the *only* obstacle existing to the fulfilment of such a desire, even supposing it ever to have existed; and, furthermore, there were many reasons for believing that this supposed desire never did in reality exist. There was, besides, another consideration which leads strongly to the same conclusion, viz., that the effect of this antipathy of the king was

greatly exaggerated. The Whigs had never shown any very great liking for Mr. Brougham—had never considered him as their regular leader;—though they were glad to avail themselves of the service rendered by his surpassing ability, they had most unwillingly allowed him to assume the character of a Whig partisan—and had on previous occasions not only evinced their readiness to separate their interests from his, but had actually done so in two separate instances. His enmity they doubtless dreaded, for, assuredly, he would have proved a most dangerous foe; still had the Duke of Wellington offered to coalesce with the Whig party in 1830, who can believe they would have refused the alliance had it only been clogged with the condition that Mr. Brougham was not to be included in the proposed invitation? This royal antipathy was only talked of, when to the world it began to be plain that the Duke had resolved not to enter into this much hoped-for, but to him utterly distasteful alliance.

But George IV. was dead — his reign was at an end—and the historian may at this epoch be permitted to pause for a moment and remark on the character of a man with whom the Whigs during his early life and manhood had been allied as personal friends and political advisers, and against whom in his later years they had exhibited a bitter political animosity, rendered fierce, rancorous, and unremitting by a sense of personal wrong, resulting from his grievous disappointment of their long-cherished

and ambitious expectations. The generation whom he injured has now, for the most part, passed away; and we are far enough removed from the interests and the passions of the times in which he lived to be impartial in our judgments respecting him, and those with whom he acted, in so far as impartiality depends upon an absence of all mere personal feelings. The picture as we regard it is simply one of historic interest. No one now regards George IV. with more of personal feeling than if he were one of the Tudors or the Stuarts, and the fact of this utter absence of every sign or symptom of sympathy towards a powerful king, who died comparatively but a few years since, is a damning proof of the worthlessness of the man who is even now only remembered because he was once a king.

From the commencement to the end of his career, there was one thing, and one thing only, which he regarded, and that was himself. Sympathy with another he never felt—love he never knew—and, we suspect, never inspired;[1] of friendship he was equally ignorant. When a boy, and fancying himself in love, just at the age, and under the influence of emotions, which would have kindled in him some

[1] The only respectable connexion he ever formed was with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she seems to have felt towards him something like love. The stern, inflexible resentment she showed, however, when he deceived and left her, betrays more of selfishness and selfish passion than accords with a real and generous love. Her conduct was wise, was justified—but would a woman who had loved have been so strictly wise?

generosity, if any spark had existed which could have been fanned into a flame, he was base, sordid, and cruel. But his mistress, poor Perdita, was not better used than the most illustrious of his friends, Mr. Fox; his conception of the duties of friendship not being more exalted than his view of that passion which he was pleased to denominate love. His own gratification was all he sought, and that he sought utterly reckless of every consideration but his own wishes and desires. Of truth he was wholly regardless himself; and without scruple led Mr. Fox to assert solemnly in his name that which he (the prince) knew to be a falsehood. Mr. Fox is said never to have forgiven the insult, and to have withdrawn himself from a companionship which required such degrading services, so soon as he discovered the falsehood of the denial, which in the name of the prince he had given to the assertion that a marriage had been celebrated between the prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert. This indignant renunciation of this unworthy friendship does Mr. Fox honour. Had the party, of which Mr. Fox was the acknowledged head, followed his example, their fame would not have been tarnished as it now is by the foul fellowship to which they submitted; neither would they have suffered that bitter disappointment of their hopes which occurred upon the insanity of the king, George III., and which proved the fitting punishment and retribution for that base subserviency which their diseased ambition led them to evince. The Whigs, for their own party

purposes, allied themselves to the Prince of Wales against the king. 'In the scramble for power they highly valued him as an auxiliary'[1]—they extenuated his vices—excused his extravagance—endeavoured to persuade parliament to pay the debts which this wild extravagance had entailed on him;—spite of his gross conduct to his wife, they countenanced and supported him—and, at last, only discovered his baseness and his vice when he treated their unworthy services as they deserved to be treated, contemptuously flinging them off the moment they ceased to be necessary and useful.

In the conduct of George IV. after he became regent there is little, excepting that which regarded the queen, which distinguishes him from the common herd of ordinary sovereigns. Age and dissipation had by that time so tamed his passions, that mere ease was his chief enjoyment. This ease he best consulted by yielding to, and floating with, the current of opinion. He therefore determined to allow the leaders of the great Tory majority in both Houses of the legislature to decide upon what the exigencies of the state required. To the people he rendered the best, the only service of which he was capable, by withdrawing from the world, and shutting himself up in Windsor, with such associates as suited his crapulous tastes and faded desires.

[1] Lord Brougham uses these words in his character of George IV., vol. ii. p. 5, of his *Statesmen*.

Decorum, at least, was maintained by the secresy which he sought, and the less he interfered with the business of the state the better was his rule. From the great events which occurred while he was regent, he derived no honour. He contributed no more to the victories of the Duke of Wellington, than his father did to the discoveries of Watt. Posterity will regard him simply as a chronological mark, useful as showing when certain great deeds were achieved, but in no other way deriving from them either honour or renown.[1]

The House of Commons no sooner met after the accession of the new king, William IV., than the ill-temper of the opposition was evinced by the marked change which took place in their language. Mr. Brougham seemed at a loss for some person on whom he might vent his wrath, and therefore fell at once upon the lord steward as the official nearest at hand, and of whose conduct he might

[1] If we are to believe Lord Eldon, George IV. felt compunctious visitings for having given his assent to catholic emancipation. He, however, assigned no reason to the ex-chancellor for having complied with the Duke of Wellington's request, though he lamented the course which the minister advised, and which he was about to adopt. There is nothing improbable either in his compunction or his acting in a manner he thought wrong. He was ignorant and a bigot, but his love of ease determined his conduct. To have resisted the Duke, turned out the ministry, braved the chance of civil war, would have required trouble, and must have therefore given him pain. With him it was 'après nous le deluge.'—See Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. iii.

complain, without appearing to go out of his way in search of a quarrel. The scene was significant—giving the ministers to understand, that he (Mr. Brougham) at least had no intention of any longer forming a portion of what was termed his Majesty's opposition, but that he was about to resume in earnest the character of an opponent; and when people are determined to quarrel, a pretext is never wanting. Mr. Brougham had no sooner brought to a close his diatribe against the lord steward, for the supposed insult to the House arising from some accidental delay, than Lord Milton gave notice, that next session he should bring the subject of the corn laws before the House. This was on Saturday,—the House adjourned till Monday, on which day several members having taken the oaths rendered necessary by the accession of the new king, the speaker took the chair, and Mr. Brougham again opened his fire by giving notice that he should next day present a petition respecting the abolition of colonial slavery, and that on the 6th of July 'it was his intention (subject of course to circumstances that may arise out of the arrangement to be made to-morrow) to bring forward a proposition, with a view to take the opinion of the House on the question of colonial slavery.' The arrangements of the morrow alluded to, were the ministerial explanations, to be given upon presenting the message of the king to the two Houses of parliament.

The message itself set forth the plan of the ministers—which considering that the Duke of Wellington was the minister, excited surprise and disappointment. That plan was simply a mode of attaining momentary ease—a staving off of the great questions that must at some early period be discussed, and which by being delayed, became only the more perplexing. The message after formal words of sorrow respecting the late king's death, observed, that by law the present parliament must immediately terminate—that consequently it would be dissolved with as little delay as possible—and further, his Majesty, as a means to enable him thus to act, recommended that a temporary provision should be made for the conduct of the public service, in the interval that must elapse between the close of the old and the meeting of the new parliament.

The Duke of Wellington's speech on the discussion that followed in the House of Lords was rather a curiosity than anything else. Like most men accustomed to the real, serious, and anxious business of life, the Duke was little fitted to enact a part in the unmeaning displays required by a formal etiquette. He did not feel himself at home in the common-places of courtly panegyric, nor was he able to fulfil the office of a mere rhetorician, and by the grace of his expression lend a fleeting charm to hollow phrases of insincere compliment. When he asserted that 'the manners of George IV.

had received a polish, his understanding acquired a *degree of cultivation almost unknown to any individual*,' it is clear that the Duke was talking at random, and employing words, because they came—not because they expressed either what he believed or what was true;—when subsequently in his panegyric he declared that his late Majesty 'on every occasion displayed a degree of knowledge and of talent not often to be expected of an individual holding his high station,' he in some measure explains what he really wished to express while thus floundering about after a meaning. For a king, he was remarkable for his polished manners and his knowledge of business. The Duke of Wellington has doubtless had great experience of kings, and by this speech shows that he has a very mean opinion of their courtesy and their intellect. Upon such a question we are not willing—not able to dispute his authority.

The address in answer to this message from the Lords and Commons, was confined solely to expressions of condolence for the loss which his Majesty had sustained in the death of his brother, the real business relating to the subsequent proceedings of the session being postponed to another day in order to attain unanimity on the present occasion. The scene in the House of Commons when this address was proposed and agreed to, *nemine contradicente*, was curious, and suggested perplexing doubts respecting the extent and meaning of those conventional rules

which govern public men in the expression of their opinions. 'What is truth' was indeed asked upon a celebrated occasion. But the questioner would not stay for an answer, and to this hour, they by whom the affairs of nations are conducted on that great stage which has the whole world for an audience, do not seem to know—or knowing, do not appear to feel 'that clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehoods is like alloy of coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it.'[1] Sir Robert Peel gravely said, when speaking of George IV., that 'Posterity will regard his late Majesty as a sovereign who, during war, maintained the honour and advanced the glory of England, and who during the whole period of his delegated trust, or of his reign as sovereign, never exercised, or wished to exercise, a prerogative of the Crown except for the advantage of his people. I am not overstepping the bounds of sober truth when I state that his Majesty was an enlightened friend of liberty, that he was an admirable judge and liberal patron of the fine arts; and I can from my own personal experience assert that his heart was ever open to any appeal which could be made to his benevolence, and to the saving of human life, or the mitigation of human suffering.'[2]

---

[1] BACON'S *Essays*, '*Truth*.'

[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2590.

The address thus ushered in to the notice of the House was seconded by Mr. Brougham—an address which 'condoled' with his Majesty on the loss of a sovereign so justly dear to his Majesty and to his people. The extent to which he in his heart assented to the assertions of Sir Robert Peel's extravagant eulogy was shown, when in after years, under no influence we are bound to suppose but that love of truth which should ever guide the pen of an historian, he thus spoke of the monarch whose loss was now deplored. 'It is impossible,' says Lord Brougham, 'to separate from the history of George IV. that of his wife, for it is united with the most remarkable features of his character; boundless caprice—his arbitrary nature—his impatience of contradiction and restraint —his recklessness of consequences when resolved to attain a private end—qualities which, if guided by a desire of compassing greater ends, and sustained by adequate courage, would have aroused a struggle for absolute power, fatal either to the liberties of the country or to the existence of the monarchy.'[1] Though for the sake of unanimity Mr. Brougham consented to second the address, he carefully guarded against the danger of being supposed 'to have abandoned any public principle or private feeling' by so doing. This, however, was the first step in pursuit of the policy which governed the Whig party through-

[1] *Statesmen. Characters* by Lord BROUGHAM, Second Series, p. 25.

out the reign of the new king. They were determined not again to have a 'personal' quarrel with the monarch, and thus to place themselves in a painful position when called into his presence, or forced to act in his name. Whatever might happen, therefore, they were resolved to be on good terms with the king, having experienced the mischief done to their party in consequence of their unhappy strife with his predecessor. Sir Robert Peel had indulged in panegyric upon the late—Mr. Brougham employed his powers in eulogizing the new sovereign. Nothing, therefore, was heard but a song of praise, on the dead and the living.[1] Of the stern voice of truth, not a whisper was heard. The language would hardly have been different, had the pious Antoninus died, and the philosophic Aurelius succeeded to his virtues and his power.

On the 30th of June, the real business began. In the Lords, the Duke of Wellington moved an answer to the message, merely echoing it, and declaring that

---

[1] A well-known, nay, almost hacknied description, surely must, on this occasion, have thrust itself upon the recollection of Mr. Brougham. The indignant phrase of Tacitus paints the scene to the life, in which the learned speaker bore so prominent a part:—

'At Romæ ruere in servitium, consules, patres eques: quantò quis inlustrior, tantò magis falsi et festinantes; vultuque composito ne læti excessu principis, neu tristiores primordio, lacrimas, gaudium, questus, adulationes miscebant.' Had this been the death of Tiberius, and not Augustus, the similarity would have been complete.

they would apply themselves to forwarding the measure necessary to provide for the temporary supply asked for. The statement of the Duke in support of his proposal was short, plain, and to the purpose. Everybody, he said, is and will be so occupied with the coming elections that no one will be willing to give adequate attention to the important business which must be decided; therefore the best, and indeed the quickest and shortest mode of proceeding will be to dissolve at once;—when the elections are completed, to call parliament together, and then carefully discuss, and decide upon, the questions which the necessities of the country will bring before parliament. This proposal, which really appears very reasonable, gave great offence, or seemed to do so, to the opposition party. Lord Grey, in a long speech full of solemn warnings of evil, craved a delay of four-and-twenty hours, giving reasons at the same time for entertaining doubts as to the wisdom of dissolving parliament before providing for a regency. Suppose the king to die before the new parliament is chosen, or before it could meet. The heir-presumptive is a child in fact, but not in law—no regency existing, she would be legally in the possession of her full regal power, though a mere child. These circumstances are full of danger. Such was the argument, in which certainly there was something of truth and force, but the danger was exaggerated. That any real mischief would ever, under the supposed case, have occurred no one seriously believed —though, perhaps, some formal difficulties might have

arisen which would have perplexed the heralds, and the sticklers for precise adherence to precedent. All knew, however, that the business of the nation would proceed as usual, and that peace would be preserved, and the law retain its regular dominion. The appointment of a regency has often been the subject of great party strife, giving rise to interminable debates, leading to nothing except loss of time and loss of temper. This probably was the circumstance which determined the administration in their proposed plan of immediate dissolution, together with the postponement of all the business of the session. That by this course the loss of all the labour already given to various subjects during the session was incurred was clear, and to that extent the dissolution at the moment was an evil; still what the Duke of Wellington asserted respecting the entire occupation of all men's thoughts by the interests of the coming election was true and of great weight. To go on with the session, or to stop at once, were two courses, both of which had peculiar evils attending them, and between which it was difficult to decide. Had the ministers determined to go on with the session, the opposition would have been equally loud and ingenious in setting forth the mischiefs of the course they had adopted.

Lord Eldon was facetious and fertile in his anticipations of mischief;—the king might die—this was a cause of difficulty, because the heir-presumptive was a child—but there was even another cause of difficulty—on the death of the king, the queen, though the supposition was not very probable, might be pregnant.

In illustrating the difficulties of the case, the ex-chancellor excited the wonder of some, the anger of others, and the risibility of many more, by talking about little peers enclosed in the bodies of their mothers—of the House of Lords being, by a second Guy Fawkes, blown into the air, and the difficulty of directing the writs, in such a case, to the new House of Lords.

The Lord Chancellor, he said, would have to ascertain whether there was any little peer not then visible, but who might be so in due course of time; and until that was determined, the title would be, as it were, in abeyance. 'He applied this rule to the queen, saying, there must be a real or a phantom king, and it is just the same in principle whether this little king be not able to speak or walk, or whether he be in *ventre sa mère*."[1] And on the strength of this contingency

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2598. In days of yore, Lord Eldon had indeed acted in the name of a phantom king. See Lord Brougham's remarks on the conduct of Lord Eldon during the insanity of George III. (*Characters of Statesmen*, vol. ii. p. 56.) When the learned lord (Eldon) acknowledged in this debate, that 'if he were prime minister there was nothing that he would like more than a little king whom he could play with,' he gave evidence of an ambitious spirit, upon whose dictates he in former times had acted. When, however, he went on to say, 'It would, no doubt, be much more convenient, than to have a sovereign who would not submit to dictation—the noble Duke knows very well to what I allude,' his desire to make an offensive insinuation, respecting the power of the Duke over the mind of George IV., made him forget his own criminal dictation to the insane father of George IV., under circumstances unparalleled in English history.

he opposed his old friends who had left him out in their last distribution of office. Lord Ellenborough's taste was grievously shocked by Lord Eldon's anile allusions, and he read him a severe lesson on the proprieties of debate. The anti-catholic party, still retaining their anger, joined Lord Grey in condemning the ministerial proposal. A long unprofitable wrangle ensued—dull repetitions dragged out the debate, when, at length, as the Duke wisely refused to accede to the proposition for a useless interval of delay, the division came, and proved the numerical strength of the administration.

For the adjournment	56
Against it	100
Majority . . .	44

Hereupon Lord Grey moved as an amendment a counter address, which had evidently been arranged by the opposition as a party. Lord Althorp, in the Commons on the same evening, by moving precisely the same words by way of amendment, gave the world to understand that the course now adopted by the Whigs was a party-move, not the result of merely individual distrust or objection. This amendment in the Lords was negatived without discussion or division.

Sir R. Peel, in the Commons, on the same evening, (the 30th of June,) prefaced his motion for an address with an explanation, fuller and far more minute and detailed than that of the Duke of Wellington. The

arguments were, however, the same, and were not strengthened by the increased number of words employed to explain them; but Sir Robert Peel passed in review the various subjects which had been brought under the consideration of parliament by the administration, described the state of forwardness of each, and then stated the course which in each case the government intended to adopt. The most important of those which they intended to continue and carry into effect were the Beer Bill, and that relating to the sugar duties, the last, in the language of Sir Robert Peel, 'making it, of course, necessary for the government to consider the state of the West India interest.' Mr. Brougham's threatened motion respecting colonial slavery had probably some influence on this selection.

Lord Althorp, as Lord Grey had done in the Lords, moved the adjournment of the House for twenty-four hours, on the plea of surprise, and the necessity of time for consideration. Mr. Brougham, on seconding this motion of his party chief, touched with a delicate hand the tender subject of the civil list, endeavouring to avoid offence while he gave reasons for suggesting that the present parliament just about to render an account of its conduct to those in whose name it had acted, should provide for the royal comforts and expenses, rather than that a newly-elected and probably long-lived parliament should perform that grateful, though sometimes invidious duty. He hinted at, rather than stated reasons for anticipating more of prudent frugality on the part of the expiring than

the newly-chosen body; but in the same breath he declared that his mind on this subject was not quite decided. Two objects were evidently before the eyes of the speaker—not entirely compatible—to gain with the people the reputation of being a friend of economy, and yet not to offend the monarch and his family by exhibiting an appearance of what to them would be a most distasteful parsimony. The next subject to which he alluded, was, he said, yet more important than that of the civil list—the regency had to be settled. The necessity for an arrangement was great and immediate, but there were evidently circumstances connected with it which made every speaker exceedingly cautious, periphrastic, and indeed nearly unintelligible, when treating what may be deemed a very plain and not a difficult matter. A superstitious dislike to make a will or any provisions to take effect after the death of the person so disposing, is by no means uncommon. With many weak people any discussion or arrangement which proceeds upon the supposition of their death, is not only distasteful but absolutely painful, and with royal personages it is often peculiarly so. The mere contemplation of death has a levelling tendency. The language of Mr. Brougham, on the present occasion, proves that he feared lest some weakness of this description lodged in the royal mind, making it dangerous for those who hoped to win the royal favour to discourse upon the possibility, nay, the probability, of the king's death. The dexterity of the orator was tasked to find phrases

of a nature, which, while they were sufficiently explicit, could not frighten or annoy the person to whom they referred. 'If I,' said Mr. Brougham, 'as a British subject and member of parliament, thought it was consistent with my high duties as such to suffer myself to be actuated solely by motives of delicacy or personal regard or deference to what might be felt elsewhere, I should gladly refrain from at all touching on this topic—though I hope that elsewhere there is too much magnanimity—too much patriotism—too much manliness—too much strength of mind, to permit the illustrious sovereign now upon the throne to hesitate—to fear—to shrink from looking in the face that ultimate termination of his earthly existence from which a recent event may show him that princes no more than their subjects are exempt. If, as I have already said, I were merely to look to feelings of delicacy, and to private considerations, I should abstain from broaching this question, and I should endeavour to conceal from my own eyes, and from the eyes of my sovereign, the possibility of a calamity which might render a regency necessary."[1] After thus describing the very thing he feared, and because he feared it declaring that it could not exist in the royal mind, he proceeded to urge upon the House the necessity for an immediate arrangement, and the dangers arising from delay. He rhetorically dwelt upon the evil of allowing the people to learn the

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2616.

dangerous fact that government could go on, and every exigence of the common weal be provided for, without a king. The act which had appointed the present king's immediate predecessor regent, he declared had a strong tendency to produce that effect. That act was passed without the royal sanction—the king being insane, and no provision having been made to meet the calamity that occurred, 'which act of parliament was called a law, but it was no law; it had not even the semblance of a law, and the power which it conveyed was in those days called the phantom of royal authority. The fact, indeed, was, that the tendency of that act of parliament, more than any other act that had ever been passed by the legislature, was to inflict a blow on the royal authority; to diminish its influence and weight; to bring it into disrepute with, and to lessen it in the estimation of the people at large; and that fact is in itself a sufficient comment upon the propriety of doing an act of legislation without having the Crown to sanction it. That act went further than anything I know to teach the people of England a lesson which it is not easy to unlearn. It showed them that it was possible to do acts of legislation without a king, and without the sanction of the Crown: that is my first, great, principal reason for proceeding with this question at once.'[1] With great skill he then proceeded to insist upon the necessity of immediately passing a law to

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2616.

determine who should be permanently regent supposing a demise of the Crown to occur, when the heir was yet in reality an infant. To this end he explained with great clearness and truth, the singular advantages existing in the monarchical form of government arising from the *certainty* of succession, proving at the same time that these advantages were lost in consequence of the delay that would take place were the ministerial plan adopted. This topic brought the learned gentleman to a ground so full of obstacles and difficulties, that a less practised, less skilful speaker would have found it almost impossible to pursue his way among them unhurt and unimpeded. These difficulties were occasioned by the fact that the Duke of Cumberland, the most unpopular man in the country, was the eldest of the remaining brothers of the king, and supposing the king dead, heir-presumptive of the throne of England and actually King of Hanover. If the king were to die, and the regency were not settled, the oft-mooted question would arise—viz., whether the next heir to the throne was of right regent in case of any incompetence whether from infancy, insanity, or otherwise, on the part of the sovereign. In the present case, this heir-presumptive, 'this heir-apparent,' as Mr. Brougham somewhat incorrectly termed him, would be a reigning foreign monarch—so unpopular himself as really to render his accession doubtful should he by any calamity become the legal king and not merely heir, while there were brothers, on the contrary, beloved by

the people, together with a maternal uncle of her who under the supposition would be the reigning queen. These circumstances, any one of which was formidable as leading probably to confusion would, being united, prove fearfully efficacious in producing mischief—if in any heart there should lurk an insane ambition—or among the people uncompromising hate, or misleading terror. 'We are now calm, and can discuss without heat the various claims of the several princes of the blood; but who can answer for our being able at a future period with the same deliberation to decide upon the rival claims to the regency for the seven years of minority. 'Can we,' said the speaker with admirable art—'can we promise ourselves a calm discussion of the subject, when there should be an actual accession of the Duke of Cumberland to the throne of Hanover, and parliament are suddenly called upon to decide upon his election to the regency, to the supreme rule in this country, to which, according to the principle of Mr. Pitt, he has a paramount claim, although he has not a strict legal right?'[1]

Having once again urged the House to decide upon the two questions of the civil list and the regency, having protested that in making this pressing request he was not moved by any hostility to the existing administration, the anxious orator finished as he began, with earnestly, nay vehemently, declaring that

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2618.

he meant no disrespect to the sovereign himself in anything he had advanced. 'Indeed, Sir, I do trust,' he said, 'that I have not appeared in any the slightest degree to depart from that profound respect and cordial attachment which, humble individual as I am, I beg to express with the same sincerity I feel towards the illustrious prince who is now seated upon the throne of these realms.'[1]

The enumeration of the measures which the government intended to perfect called off the attention of members interested therein from the party question which the Whigs wished to discuss. This effect necessarily gave a desultory character to the debate, and weakened the force of the attack made by the opposition. Mr. Huskisson endeavoured to act the part of a dignified and disinterested adviser—a mediator above party passions, and superior to mere personal considerations. For this pretension he was rebuked by his old colleague, Sir Robert Peel, who suggested that he seemed to have forgotten that he had himself been a servant of the Crown, and had for twenty years been connected with all the acts of the government. Mr. Huskisson, from some of the expressions used by the right honourable secretary, was led to believe that he was accused of forgetting his duty of a privy councillor, and rose for the purpose of making, or requesting some explanation; whereupon Sir Robert Peel stated that he had misunderstood what was said.

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, June 30, p. 2618.

'What I wished to express was this, that my right honourable friend appeared frequently to forget that he had ever been a minister of the Crown.' The obvious sarcastic answer could not be resisted, even by an old friend. Bowing profoundly, Mr. Huskisson gravely replied, 'I am unconscious of having acted with the forgetfulness imputed to me, but I bow with great humility to all lessons received from my right honourable friend on the subject of inconsistency.'[1] It was clear that Mr. Huskisson remembered that he was *not* a minister of the Crown. Of the past he might be forgetful, the present he but too acutely remembered. Under the thin disguise of a pretended moderation and exalted patriotism, bitter personal spite was seen to rankle, governing every thought, word, and act.

Lord John Russell professed to explain the real reasons for the whole proceeding on the part of the government; and certainly his explanation was not unplausible.

'I say, that when we endeavour to analyse the arguments of the right honourable secretary, they amount to this—that it will be for the convenience of honourable members to leave their duties, to abandon their seats, in order to secure to themselves new seats, and to carry on their canvass at the least possible expense. And it will also be convenient for his Majesty's ministers, instead of having to deal with

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2628.

members who are about to meet their constituents in a short time, to meet with the members of a new parliament, who, whatever their vote may be on the civil list, or any other question, will hope that, in the course of five or six years, it may be overlooked or forgotten by their constituents.'[1] The words of the noble lord were of importance, as showing the intentions of his party. When he said, therefore, in plain terms, 'in the ministry as a whole, and particularly in the ministry in this House, I can place no confidence,' they who watched with any interest the working of mere party politics, understood that the Whigs had now determined to declare war upon the ministry generally, and more especially upon Sir Robert Peel, who was at this moment known to be peculiarly obnoxious to the Tory party. The Duke of Wellington was in some measure looked upon by both the contending factions as a person that might be of use to them as head of the army. The Tories, therefore, who wished to retain, the Whigs, who desired to win him, abstained in some degree[2] from personal attacks in his case, but fell in consequence with concentrated virulence upon his colleague, whom they both hated and feared.

The particular charge brought against the ministry

---

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2628.

[2] Not entirely. The Whigs wished to make the Duke uncomfortable, in the hope of inducing him to relax his determination not to admit them to office. Lord John Russell, in this very debate, as if with reluctance, accused the Duke of being guilty of a job.

by Lord John Russell was weakness and incapacity for business—which he said were shown by their present proposal. This charge was many times repeated during the remainder of the session, and the particular proof adduced in support of the accusation was, that many measures which had been recommended in the king's speech, after having been partially discussed and carried through many parliamentary stages, had been suddenly relinquished. 'I have seen their propositions,' said the noble lord, 'one after another—if not rejected—so shaken, that they are obliged to throw overboard half the business before the House; and though it may be unpleasant to them to hear it, I will say one word more—I say their weakness has been conspicuously shown.'[1]

On the division which followed, the smallness of the numbers showed that the anticipations of the ministry were well founded as to the impossibility of keeping members of the House of Commons in London, when a general election was seen to be immediately coming. In spite of the importance of the question in debate—in spite of the curiosity which the first debate of a new reign was sure to excite, the numbers were only—

For the adjournment	139
Against	185
Majority . . .	46

[1] This hint may possibly have suggested Lord Lyndhurst's celebrated review of the session, and description of the slaughter of the Whig innocents.

In the House of Lords the division on the adjournment was considered final, Lord Grey's amendment being only formally put, and negatived without division or further debate. The excitement of the opposition in the House of Commons was evidently not so easily allayed. The smallness of the majority had raised their hopes, and they fancied that by further discussion the ministry would be yet more seriously damaged. Sir Robert Peel, when Lord Althorp almost without observation moved the amendment, in the very words of Lord Grey, stated in most courteous phrase that he meant no disrespect by abstaining from any further discussion, but that as he could only re-urge the arguments which he had just employed—which would be a waste of time and labour—he should refrain from offering any remarks to the House. Mr. Brougham, however, not content thus to let the opportunity pass, launched out against the ministry in a strain of bitter invective, of sarcasm vehement even to fierceness. Many parts of this evidently unpremeditated attack were most effective examples of the peculiar style of declamation in which Mr. Brougham so pre-eminently excelled; but, unfortunately for himself, his cause, and his party, his excitement carried him beyond the control of his judgment, and hurried him into the use of expressions which were not justified by the circumstances of the case, and which certainly did not accurately denote the real sentiments of the speaker. After having quelled the impatient House into silence, by a con-

temptuous description of those whose sole powers consisted of inarticulate noises and unmeaning yells, he proceeded to describe the unhappy condition of the ministry. He harped upon their late wretched majority, extolled the economic virtues of Mr. Hume, sneered at the weak attempts at debate hazarded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and endeavoured and with great effect to enlist the pride of the House and the country on his side by alluding to a threat supposed to have been employed by the Duke of Wellington that night in the Lords—'I will resign, if you do not vote with me.' On this threat, most unwise if ever made, he descanted in language most happily chosen to express scorn, contemptuous defiance, and bitter indignation. Swept along by the torrent of his own eloquence, he dashed across the Channel and seized on the unhappy minister of Charles X., for the purposes of invidious comparison with the prime minister of his own king. He then, with a prophetic instinct of the fate that was about to befal Prince Polignac, warned the noble Duke of the consequence of following his fatal example. The good genius of the speaker here deserted him; for he now—excited by the picture which his vivid imagination made almost present to his physical as it was to his mental vision, of the terrible evils which an appeal to force was about to bring upon France, and which, if it were employed, would assuredly be entailed on England also—seemed to believe that there were officious and mischievous supporters advising the

minister to follow the example of M. de Polignac. To those imaginary advisers he thus addressed himself:—

'You will see in this as in that country, that the day of force is now over, and that he who would rule his country by an appeal to royal favour or military power may be overwhelmed, may be hurled down by it, if he should entertain such an idea—and I in no wise accuse him of thinking of such an attempt; him I accuse not; I——' and here the excited orator stretched out his long, bony arm, and pointed, with a lean and almost skeleton finger, at the Treasury bench—'I accuse you, I accuse his flatterers, those mean, fawning parasites——'

Sir Robert Peel rose at once, and in grave, indignant terms, called the learned gentleman to order.

'I ask the honourable and learned gentleman, as I am one of those sitting on this side of the House, whether he means to accuse me of being a fawning parasite?'

Checked thus suddenly in mid career, Mr. Brougham seemed at once to perceive that the phrase he had used and the charge he had brought, were not to be justified, and instantly, therefore, disclaimed every intention of applying the words to Sir Robert Peel himself—who truly observed on this retractation that it was hardly sufficient—and declared that he would, therefore, on behalf of Mr. Brougham, make the apology and retractation which ought to have been made by the learned gentleman

himself. This he did, and Mr. Brougham with great good sense and good feeling adopted it. This incident stopped, if it did not turn, the tide that was setting strongly against the administration, and the division on the amendment was very nearly the same in result as the one already taken; the numbers being—

For the original motion—Ayes	. .	193
Noes	. .	146
		47

The opposition were not yet satisfied. The question of the regency, though not unlikely to create disagreeable feelings in the royal mind, gave the Whigs many advantages in debate, enabling them to injure the ministers in public opinion, without seriously risking their chance of favour with the king. Discontent and excitement were fast rising out of doors, which from the personal popularity of the king turned wholly against the administration. This personal popularity was caused merely by the novelty of the king's behaviour. His brother, George IV., had for years entirely withdrawn himself from public view, till Windsor had become in the public opinion a second Capreæ with its modern Tiberius. The appearance of William in the streets—his simple manners, talkative habits, his bustling good humour, gave immense delight to the gaping multitudes of London, who are ever pleased to have some person of exalted station after whom

they may run, crowd, and shout. So good-natured a person as the king, could not be, they thought, the author of any evil; they therefore made the ministers answerable for every suffering of which they complained. The opposition in parliament were careful not to run counter to this popular estimation. To keep on good terms with the king was enjoined by every rule of their policy. Consequently, when Mr. Robert Grant on the 6th of July, in pursuance of a motion given some days before, brought on again the subject of the regency, he and his whole party were at immense pains to protest against any imputation of a want of loyalty and respect towards the sovereign thus beloved by his people. They were profuse of declarations of respect, admiration, nay, almost of veneration for the monarch whom a beneficent Providence had so happily placed upon the throne of these realms. They humbled themselves in the dust when they approached the question, and the prostration was an edifying spectacle in the month of July, 1830.

Mr. Robert Grant when requesting the attention of the House to his notice, said in doing so, 'it is unnecessary for me to say that I feel, in all their full force, the magnitude, difficulty, and delicacy attending the subject I have been so bold as to bring forward. I am quite aware that it is impossible, under any circumstances—even considering this an abstract subject—that in a question so closely connected with the well-being of the monarchy—so

intimately blended with the interests of the state and constitution of this country, there should not intervene in the heart of every loyal subject a feeling of hesitation and dislike to enter upon those details which render the measure one so delicate and difficult.'[1] He then proceeded to talk of the possible death of the king, which he called 'the conjectural anticipation of an event,' as a circumstance which communicated to the subject an intense and sorrowful interest'—'an event which, whenever it may occur, would fill the nation with mourning, and which now could not be anticipated without the most profound and painful emotion.' After having by this fulsome talk defended himself and his party from the imputation of disrespect to the king, Mr. Grant proceeded to urge the arguments which had been repeated many times in the previous debates. He was met, however, with a new objection. The House, said the supporters of the administration, is precluded from the course now proposed, by the address which it has already laid at the foot of the throne. You have already promised to adopt the course recommended by the Crown, and cannot recede from that engagement. The opposition endeavoured to evade the force of this objection, by vividly describing the evils that might possibly result from the delay. And one remarkable observation which occurred during the debate was, when its truth was soon painfully

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2769.

exemplified, remembered with awe as well as with sorrow. Mr. Huskisson on the 6th of July, when dwelling upon the danger of postponing the settlement of the regency, and the frail tenure of human life, thus addressed the House in words of almost prophetic and ominous warning:—

'My honourable and learned friend has well observed that of all men, the present ministry ought to be the last to overlook the precariousness and uncertainty of human life. He recalled to their recollection the sudden manner in which Lord Liverpool had been struck to the earth, and incapacitated from the discharge of his important duties. On the 16th of February he was transacting the public business of the country, in full vigour of mind and body, and in the enjoyment of complete health, and the next day his faculties were gone. Who could have expected that within a few days after the prorogation of parliament, in which Mr. Canning had appeared as the successor of Lord Liverpool, that eminent minister would be numbered with the illustrious dead?'[1]

The truth of this touching appeal to the prudence of the House of Commons was within a few weeks shown by the sudden and accidental death of him who thus recalled them to a sense of the fleeting and uncertain tenure of their own existence.

To these obvious suggestions of prudence, the Soli-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2781.

citor, the Attorney General and Sir Robert Peel replied, and not without some force, by remarking upon the apathy shown during the very debate in which they were engaged. They endeavoured at the same time to justify their conduct by appeals to precedent, and by describing the chances of mischief as unworthy of regard. One argument employed by the opposition was deemed at that time peculiarly effective. All the Whig speakers laid particular stress upon the danger to the monarchy resulting from delay. The manner in which they availed themselves of this topic was in accordance with their general rule of conduct. The see-saw enabled them to take alternately two different views of the same subject—in one part of their statement to dwell upon the follies and inconsistencies of the monarchical institution—in the other, to extol its benefits, and preponderating advantages. The two portions of the argument would be of use, under very different circumstances. That such a mode of reasoning might of itself lead to the mischief they described, upon the principle that prophecies often fulfil themselves did not deter these daring politicians. The thrones of Europe might be tottering to their fall, and the theoretic excellence which the arguments described might be approaching, but the opposition only remembered the long years in which they had been excluded from power—power which they fancied now within their grasp—with such a prize in view, they were not men to falter because of the danger attending an argument. In the month of July, in the year 1830, one

of the most learned and brilliant among the many aspirants among the Whigs for place and honour, thus spoke of the institution of monarchy—'The history of our hereditary form of government,' said Mr. Macaulay, 'does not present us with any certain security for the wisdom or virtue of the chief magistrate. The destinies of the community may be entrusted to the weak and feeble hands of infancy; and this and other consequences have afforded ample themes for the wit of the satirist and the eloquence of the declaimer. Look at this moment at the enormous weight and extent of power confided to the hereditary monarch, whether an infant or an adult; the population he governs is scarcely less than 120,000,000 of souls dispersed over the world from the Mediterranean to the Indian Archipelago—from the extreme north of the western to the extreme south of the eastern hemisphere; an authority so vast and so intricate, that perhaps few even of those who have the task of guiding the councils of the sovereign are fully aware of its extent and bearings. Yet this enormous empire, with all its complicated interests, may be placed under the control of a thoughtless boy or girl. For a child, unable to walk or to express the simplest wish in its mother tongue, the claims of veteran generals and accomplished statesmen are passed by—senates pay it homage—and by the years of its rule laws are numbered, and public acts are dated. To many this system may appear, if not absurd, unreasonable; but what is its vindication?

Why, in this enlightened age, do we resist, and would oppose even to the death, any change of that system? What is the advantage which counterbalances its great, its numerous, its admitted evils? It may be designated in one word, 'certainty.' For this it is, and this alone, that we are content to forego all the advantages that might result from securing to the realm a succession of Chathams or of Marlboroughs.'[1]

'There are many great evils in a hereditary monarchy,' said Mr. Brougham, at the close of a most powerful and admirably reasoned speech; 'there are many grievous burthens to which it subjects us, and there may be many sound political principles to which it is opposed, but it has one great redeeming feature, which would reconcile one to it even were its faults greater and more numerous—it renders the succession to the throne certain, and provides in that way an effectual remedy against that evil which can never be thought of without horror—the evil of civil war.'[2] During the former debate on the same subject, the learned gentleman had pressed with his usual power the same argument. Speaking of the common rule of succession, he said, 'This is a rule to which, as the subject of a limited monarchy, in return for the removal of many things that are evil, and the alleviation of many things that are burthensome, I am compelled to submit. This rule of accession to this office, con-

[1] See Mr. Macaulay's speech p. 2776, of *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830.

[2] *Idem.* p. 2790.

trary as it may be to sound reason and the general principles of liberty, does yet minister to us one inestimable advantage—it substitutes certainty for uncertainty, it enables one to avoid the difficulties and dangers of a disputed succession, and this is the polar star which I look to as the subject of a limited monarch.'[1]

To all these fearful denunciations of danger, the administration had no answer to make, except that they were not very likely to occur, and the assertion that it was better to run that small risk, than to settle a complicated matter in a hurry, and without due consideration. This, however, hardly seems a sufficient answer. The ministers must have considered the subject; and the arrangements necessary to constitute a safe regency were not very numerous, and certainly not very difficult. What the minister decided, the majority would adopt, and the minority oppose. There were, probably, however, two other circumstances which led the ministers to propose this delay. The first was that love of ease, which gives an administration more trouble than the most stirring industry, but which, nevertheless, is ever found exercising its baneful influence over ministerial resolves. The other circumstance was, that the ministry might hope to find the new parliament a more docile instrument than the old one; an anticipation in which, if they entertained it, they were doomed to

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2617.

be grievously deceived. The division, however, was more in their favour than the last; many members, considering the House bound by their former vote, gave up their opinion, and submitted to that of the majority. The numbers were—

For Mr. Grant's motion,	Ayes	93
	Noes	247
Majority		154

The next proceeding, and the last of the session of a party character, was far more useful to the opposition. Mr. Brougham, on the 13th of July, brought forward the motion of which he had lately given notice, on colonial slavery, in a speech which, certainly in his own opinion, exercised a marked influence over his own career, as well as on those great interests to which it related;[1] a speech full of harrowing details of terrible cruelty, and of warnings to parliament of the danger which must attend the system of permitting the slave-holding colonies to legislate on the subject of slavery. Mr. Brougham, on this occasion, proposed no plan himself, neither did he blame the government for any negligence on their part respecting the matter; he acknowledged that they were not

[1] The speech which Mr. Brougham delivered on this occasion was afterwards published among his collected speeches, and is preceded by this observation, written by himself:—'The following speech was delivered on the 13th of July, 1830. It is believed to have mainly contributed towards Mr. Brougham's election as member for the county of York, which took place a few weeks after.'

liable to any such accusation. 'In fairness I am bound to say I cannot charge this as matter of severe blame on the government, because I know the obstacles of a financial nature which have stood in the way of intentions sincerely entertained to provide a pure and efficient system of judicature for the West India Islands.'[1] All that was directly proposed, and which by the government was most unwisely resisted, was, 'that this House do resolve at the earliest practicable period next session to take into its serious consideration the state of the slaves in the colonies of Great Britain, in order to the mitigation and final abolition of slavery; and more especially in order to the amendment of the administration of justice within the same.'

Any one who had at that time carefully watched the changes in public opinion, and attended to the growth and gradual formation of ideas upon the matters brought for decision before the whole country, could not fail to perceive that on the subject of slavery their minds had been for some time made up, and that resistance to their determination to put an end to slavery in the dominions of England would soon become impossible. Watching, then, the signs of the times, a prudent minister would have resolved to yield to the imperious feeling of the people, and would have prepared the way for giving effect to the popular will, at the least possible expense and

[1] *Lord Brougham's Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 132. *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2881.

trouble. This mode of proceeding, however, is seldom adopted by English statesmen. Sir Robert Peel had not yet learned from experience the wise lesson which certainly she teaches—that there is a time when to yield wins the affection, another when it only obtains the contempt of mankind. Mr. Brougham and his party were therefore allowed exclusively to gain that favour and really affectionate regard which the people of England have always bestowed on those who have endeavoured to relieve their country from the disgrace which attends the sanction by law of the horrible institution of slavery; and which regard they are ever ready to bestow on all who in any way generously endeavour by their personal labours to alleviate human sorrow, and for the poor, the weak, and the friendless, to lighten the burthen of the many inevitable ills which attend them through life. On the present occasion, Mr. Wilmot Horton endeavoured to divert Mr. Brougham from his course, by proposing a series of resolutions full of complicated details, the only purpose of which was to evade the difficulty which Mr. Brougham's proposal raised. To these resolutions Sir George Murray, the colonial minister, stated that he could not assent, but he entreated Mr. Brougham to withdraw his motion, in order that the world might not be led to believe that the subject was not considered of importance by the House of Commons; to which conclusion they would certainly come, if they were to judge by the numbers who would divide upon the motion being put. This consideration was also

pressed by Sir Robert Peel, who said, besides, that there were expressions used in the resolution, to which he could not assent. He saw much practical evil, he said, in coming to an abstract resolution in favour of abolition, without having previously determined on the means to be employed in effecting it. Besides this reason, there was another, still more important, he said; the resolution made no mention of compensation, and that no precautions were alluded to for preparing the slaves for freedom.

Mr. Brougham knew too well the advantage of his position to relinquish it upon any such solicitation. He had the country with him; he therefore scouted the hollow pretences which were employed to mislead him. Of the character of the House he had a very contemptuous opinion, and openly expressed it—being indeed not particularly anxious for it to be held out to the world as much deserving of admiration and respect. That he should feel this is not remarkable, as, during the many years of his political existence, he had seldom found it on disputed points of his way of thinking. Against an adverse majority he had fought his way to the proud pre-eminence he now enjoyed, but amidst the many triumphs of his great intellect, he could as yet not lay claim to that of having obtained a majority in the House of Commons against the minister of the day. That was, however, yet reserved for him and his party to accomplish; but had he yielded to the soft words now employed to make him change his plan—had he not forced his proposal

to a division, his victory might still have been for some years delayed. His friends indeed mustered in small numbers on the occasion, the votes in favour of his motion being—

Ayes	27
Against it—Noes	56
Majority	29

This division ended the party struggle for this first session of 1830. Parliament was, on the 23rd of July, prorogued by the king in person, to the following August, but was the next day dissolved by proclamation, and writs returnable the 14th of September were immediately issued for a general election. The peculiar state of affairs both abroad and at home gave to the coming contests an extraordinary interest, and the elections about to take place all men felt would be among the most important that had ever occurred in the eventful history of the English parliament.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IN JULY TO THE MEETING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT IN OCTOBER, 1830.

WHEN the proclamation appeared which put an end to the last parliament of George IV., an impartial spectator of the political strife which had been carried on within it, would have found great difficulty in explaining the actual condition of political parties—to state their names, to describe their relative strength, their views, and prospects. Still greater would have been his difficulty if at that moment he had endeavoured to obtain for himself, or to give to others an accurate conception of the causes which had brought about the present condition of the administration itself, and which produced the low estimation in which it was held by the public at large. Since the commencement of the session which had just come to an end, many changes had occurred in the views and expectations of politicians. Hostility and divisions seemed to extend their baneful influence over all sections of all parties; and combination among them, excepting for purposes of annoyance, appeared

almost impossible. This increased repulsion[1] did not arise from any change in the public policy of the administration, neither could it be said to arise from any specific public acts of legislation, any positive proceedings either at home or abroad. The administration, nevertheless, had become decidedly unpopular. If at this moment an opponent had been asked to put his finger on the act or acts which had tended to produce, or which united had produced this effect, he, if a candid man, would have allowed the task proposed to be one of great, if not insuperable difficulty. The strenuous anti-catholic would indeed have asserted that the Emancipation Act was the reason of this decline in the power and popularity of the administration; but this answer is not satisfactory, because there is in it no explanation of the decline in popular favour *since* the meeting of parliament in the early

[1] In these our days of comparative calm, we can hardly form an idea of the violent and fierce anger of this period—and we start as we read the extraordinary language employed, even in grave works, against opponents. The following passage is really rather a subdued specimen of the virulent epithets employed by educated men towards each other:—'In this age of reason, anything rather than reason has ruled—and it is not by wisdom—unless indeed by that which is 'earthly, sensual, devilish'—that the warp and woof of that web which is at this time spread before us have been woven, and in which 'ample room and verge enough' have been left for the characters of hell, now traced there in black and fiery lines, that all who run may read.'—*Quarterly Review*, January, 1831. This tirade is meant to describe the convulsion to which England was brought by the Duke of Wellington's administration, and gives us the view taken of it by the high-church party.

part of the year. It may, and perhaps does sufficiently explain why the administration could not count upon, and did not receive, the support and approbation, or confidence, of those who deemed the concession to the catholics a wrong, or a mistake; but more than this occurred. The good will of the liberal party out of doors, which at one time appeared about to become hearty towards the administration, and more especially towards its head, suddenly was checked, and suspicion and distrust in their stead took possession of the public mind; and the causes of this peculiar change require to be explained. The mischief to the ministerial influence arising from the act of emancipation was known in the previous year (1829), and the explosion of that year, and the immediate division in the ranks of the ministerial party, were plain and palpable; but the effects in the present year had causes distinct from the measure of catholic emancipation; and the certain proof of it is, as we have just said, that with the classes to whom that measure was grateful the decline of the ministers' popularity was most marked—viz., the liberal party generally. And this was the more extraordinary, because all the reforming tendencies of the administration had rather increased than diminished since the Emancipation Act. Legal reform had not been checked, as was shown by the change in the punishment of forgery, and by the many discussions that occurred concerning the administration of justice generally. The Beer Bill was a direct concession to public opinion, in favour, as was believed, of the poor

labourer, to whom beer is an important beverage. Economy was, in the opinion even of Mr. Hume, carried further than it had yet been by any preceding administration. Something, nevertheless, and in despite of all these increasing liberal tendencies, created a suspicion in the public mind—diminished the popularity and the power of the Duke of Wellington, as well as of his colleagues, inducing a sense of weakness among the ministers themselves, which was soon made manifest to the public, by a hesitation and a want of firmness and decision in their language and their acts.[1]

Two sets of causes did, in fact, lead to this result: the one set was connected with our internal party politics; the other was to be found in the extraordinary state of Europe, more especially of France. The disappointment of the Whig expectations made the politicians of that party actually hostile to the

[1] The language of the *Quarterly Review* is indicative of the feelings entertained by the anti-catholic section of the Tory party—'And so far from obtaining the ease for which they looked in parliament, the *tergiverse* administration discovered, when too late, that they had broken the staff of their strength, and that in breaking up the constitutional party, they had virtually dissolved the government. Their imbecility during the session of 1830 would have been ludicrous if lesser interests than those of a nation had been at stake. Never knowing on what resistance to reckon, nor on what support to depend, they took the chance of the House, from night to night, and ventured upon no measure of importance, in the utter uncertainty of carrying anything.'—*Quarterly Review*, January and February, 1831.

Duke of Wellington and his government. The revolutions abroad, which excited the people at home, enabled the opposition to give effect to their now inveterate animosity in the elections that were about to take place.

The Duke of Wellington, as we have seen, having given offence to one large section of his friends, was for a time steadily supported by those who had formerly been his opponents. He, nevertheless, still hoping to win back the anti-catholic party, and always intending to do so the instant the cause of momentary estrangement, as he thought it, was removed, kept aloof from all alliance, or even partial connexion, with his new supporters. He turned a deaf ear to their offers and advances, giving them mortal offence by the contemptuous indifference of his manner and speech. So soon as they were convinced that coalition and friendship were impossible, they began assiduously to assail the administration in speeches, pamphlets,[1] newspapers—at political meetings, in private society, in parliamentary debates. The whole machinery of detraction, which by the Whig party has been brought to a pitch of marvellous efficiency, was called into unceasing and most active

[1] 'A powerful attack was now opened on the Wellington administration, through the medium of the press, and particularly by a pamphlet, the second of a series, attributed at the time to the new member for Yorkshire.' [Mr. Brougham]—*Quarterly Review* (or rather Mr. Croker ?), April and July, vol. xlv. p. 282.

operation, and soon produced effects altogether unlooked for, either by themselves or their opponents. Events abroad just at this critical period occurred of an extraordinary character, moving to its lowest depths the whole of English society—calling into play the energies of a united people—and thus enabling the discontented politicians of the Whig party to gather together a force in opposition which no unaided manœuvres or intrigues of their own could ever have collected. With this assistance, they resisted and eventually overturned the administration of the Duke of Wellington, changed the very system of the government of their country, and effected what has been truly termed a peaceful yet complete revolution.

Of the events abroad, and of the peculiar condition of affairs at home, which led to these remarkable results, I will now proceed to give a general, but for the purpose, I hope, a sufficient description.

Lord Aberdeen held the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the administration of the Duke of Wellington. The name of Lord Aberdeen, unfortunately for that administration, had long been associated in the minds of European politicians with those of the men who, throughout the various countries of the continent, were deemed the friends of despotism—the enemies even of the most narrow and restricted form of constitutional government. In France, more especially, was he looked upon as the enemy of freedom, because he was believed to be not merely the

friend, but the intimate adviser of Prince Polignac, the most favoured and the last prime minister of the infatuated monarch of that country, Charles X. The Duke of Wellington also, although by his countrymen always respected, in consequence of his great military services, and sometimes even greatly popular with them, was known to European nations rather as a diplomatist and statesman; and, in that character, was considered the friend and powerful colleague of those who, in 1815-16, arranged what they were pleased to term the settlement of Europe. His name was thus associated with those of men known as the sworn ministers of despotic power—the friends of the retrograde party—the enemies of advancement and liberality wheresoever and howsoever it might be manifested. He was deemed a friend to the Holy Alliance, its principles and its purposes; and his advent to power on the death of Mr. Canning was looked upon as a calamity by the *Liberals*, as they were called, in every nation, whether of Europe or America.[1] This opinion of the despotic tendency of the Duke of Wellington's own character, and of his administration, was unfortunately strengthened, and appeared in some degree to be justified by the manner in which the power of England was given to support Dom Miguel of Portugal, who, by the people of

[1] This statement is made simply as of a matter of fact. Whether this estimate of the Duke's character was correct is another thing. That the estimate was as described in the text cannot, I think, be disputed.

England, and by most nations on the continent, was considered a monster in human shape. This assistance was, on the continent, generally believed to have been rendered because Dom Miguel was the chief of the despotic as opposed to the liberal party in Portugal. This love of despotism was supposed to have overcome in the minds of the English ministers their hatred of usurpation in the instance of Dom Miguel; who, though confessedly a usurper, was supported by the despotic, who are usually what are termed the legitimate party in the various countries in which these epithets are employed to distinguish political factions. But the fact of legitimacy happened, in Portugal, to be on one side, despotism on the other, and England was supposed, by the advice of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen, to have deserted the legitimate and helpless queen, Donna Maria, in order to aid and maintain in power the cruel and cowardly despot who had usurped her authority.[1]

---

[1] The *Edinburgh Review* for December, 1831, gives an elaborate history of Portuguese affairs, and from it we may learn the colour which the opposition in the year 1830 endeavoured to give the whole affair. 'Meanwhile, after our troops were withdrawn from Lisbon the loyal Portuguese did make an effort to shake off the usurper's heavy yoke. Oporto fell into their hands and formed their rallying point. They had an army on foot; but a withering change had taken place in the councils of England; the more liberal members of her cabinet had been compelled to resign, and Dom Miguel, *well aware of the Holy Alliance tendencies of the new ministry*, proclaimed the blockade of Oporto.' This and similar language, used by the

The influence of England, guided by the same ministers, was believed also, throughout Europe, to have been employed to fetter and thwart the Greeks in their struggles for freedom—to have frustrated in the first place the establishment of a republic in that birth-place of liberty, art, and science; and then in the second to have prevented a liberal prince, namely, Leopold of Saxe Cobourg, accepting the offered throne of that country, because he was supposed to be a firm and enlightened friend of constitutional freedom. This opinion, prevalent as it was in Europe and the two Americas, by degrees extended to our own country, and served, in conjunction with and in consequence of a curious combination of events, materially to form and modify the English popular opinion respecting the English administration.[1]

The fifteen years of peace enjoyed by France since 1815 had not been spent in idleness by her people. The industry of her writers was never more active, or more usefully employed, than during those eventful years. There was, however, one unfortunate circumstance attending their labours, for which no

---

organs of the Whig party, caused continental politicians to believe that the popular party in England considered the Duke of Wellington an enemy of freedom.

[1] That the English ministry was really the cause of Prince Leopold's refusal of the Greek Crown, may well be doubted—but that great pains were taken to convince the world that they were so, is certain. Prince Paul of Wirtemburgh was at this time a candidate for the Greek Crown, and soliciting the favour of Charles X. in aid of his suit. It was surely the policy of our government to favour Leopold in preference to Paul.

one was answerable but the royal party, with the king, whether it were Louis XVIII. or Charles X., at their head. The royalist party was truly said to have forgotten nothing, to have learned nothing during the long period of abasement and of exile to which it had been subject from 1789 to 1815. No sooner were they replaced in power by foreign arms, than they essayed to efface every sign of the great revolution by which the institutions of their country, social, moral, religious, and political, had been overthrown and remodelled. The very Charter, which even the conquering armies of their allies thought just and necessary, they endeavoured, from the beginning of their new rule, to weaken and destroy. All the safeguards for security of person, property, and reputation, which experience has taught us are necessary for the maintenance of a civilized community, they treated with contempt—opposed—sought by every artifice to render useless;—hoping to be able by degrees, through the various means furnished by corruption, cajolery, and terror, to re-establish the ancient despotism. An acute and intelligent people, like the French, with minds rendered peculiarly suspicious and perspicacious by the extraordinary vicissitudes of their late fortunes, could not fail to perceive, and, perceiving, to resist and oppose these pernicious attempts to degrade and enthral them. Finding that the royalist party was beyond being taught, (for if they could learn nothing from the terrible lessons that misfortune had read them, to what instructors would they listen?) the whole intellectual powers of the

French were directed to the one great necessary preliminary in their country to all improvement—viz., to annihilate the mischievous force of the royalist party. For some time, the chiefs of the various sections of the liberals hoped to do this by constitutional means; and they, with laudable perseverance, addressed themselves to the irksome labour of deriving safeguards from the imperfect institutions which the Charter of Louis XVIII. had given them. But from this labour of construction they were eventually driven by the thorough hopelessness of the task. If the royalist party had honestly intended to maintain these institutions, and apply the principles upon which they were supposed to be based, fairly and in a generous loyal spirit, France would indeed have enjoyed a far happier lot than that which was in store for her. All hope of *building up* being rendered vain, by this dogged spirit of despotism—by this perverse, shallow and despicable policy of the Bourbons and their friends—the true French party now applied their whole energies to the *pulling down* and destruction of the obstacle thus laid in the path of their improvement. This could only be done by enlisting with them the nation—not simply the majority of the people—looking to numbers only, but the great majority of the intelligent, wealthy, and instructed portion of society. Despotism, with all its array of force and artifice, was on one side; intelligence and true patriotism were on the other. The struggle was fierce, and in its results terrible, for many years to the popular party. The brute force of the army, the not

less effective but more disguised power of a corrupt judicature and ruthless administration, were employed to put down, silence, and crush all who dared to invoke, for their own protection and that of their country, any principles but those of divine right and royal despotism. The battle was fought in the courts, in the Chambers—by the press, in every shape—by pamphlets, novels, histories, poems, songs, plays, speeches, grave and gay, humorous and sarcastic—by buffoonery and pathos—by every art—caricatures, painting, music—nothing was too high—nothing too mean, all were employed in this great conflict of reason against force; and at length, spite of many reverses, the victory was to them who appeared the weak. The growing intelligence of the people knit them together; the struggle had taught them all the arts of offence; their writers and thinkers were unequalled as critics to assail, *pull down*—destroy. Unfortunately, in this hurly-burly of existence, that knowledge which was needed to construct, *to build up* the social edifice, when the great obstacle to all improvement was removed, was not in an equal degree possessed by the people or by their instructors. *The habits* of a people living quietly under a law, abiding by its forms, and by its own machinery improving and perfecting it, had not, have not yet, it is to be feared, been acquired by the people of France. By their fate they have been driven to force for aid, because their rulers have never confined themselves within the limits of the law. The moment that the legal forms gave the popular party superiority, the

king and his advisers had recourse to violence. They resolved openly to break through the law. Some pretence of an adherence to it had hitherto been preserved—a pretence it was—but still the appearance, even of obedience to legal forms, could no longer be retained, as now, under every disadvantage, the majority of the Chamber was at last opposed to the arbitrary wishes and designs of the king.

On the 31st of July, in 1829, the session of the French Chambers ended. During this session the administration was without a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, and unable, therefore, to execute any of the arbitrary projects which were now prepared in the mind of the king, Charles X. This weakness the king attributed to the incompetence of the ministers themselves, never seeming to think that the mind and feelings of the people might in some degree account for it. So soon, therefore, as the Chambers were prorogued, an *ordonnance* appeared, changing the whole of the administration, and exciting terror and indignation throughout France.[1] This sudden change had a fatal influence on the popularity of the Duke of Wellington in England. The person chosen by the King of France to be one of his chief advisers, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and who was indeed

[1] This *ordonnance* was issued in August, 1829. The sketch in the text of French politics is introduced solely to explain in some measure the state of our own affairs and the unpopularity of the English ministers. It is therefore cursory, and but a sketch.

soon after appointed President of the Council, was Prince Jules de Polignac, lately ambassador in England. He was called from this post to Paris in order to receive the portfolio of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The prince was supposed to be a personal friend of the Duke of Wellington, and to have been recommended by him to the king as his chief adviser.[1] For this supposition there was not the slightest evidence; but men believed it, because of the known influence of the Duke of Wellington with the royal family of France, and because of his intimacy and friendship with the prince himself. The ministry of Charles X. was known to have been chosen for the especial purpose of forwarding the despotic plans of the king; and the people of England, as well as those of France, expected that some *coup d'etât* would be attempted against the representative form of government in that country—which, if successful in France, might also be attempted in England.[2] From this moment the liberal party in both countries seemed to be united to each other by identity of feelings and of dangers. The English people looked on the coming struggle with breathless interest, and the acts of the

[1] *The Wellington administration* was a common name for the new ministry in France. On the 2nd of November, Sir R. Peel thought it requisite, in the House of Commons, to give a formal and peremptory denial to this assertion. See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. iv. p. 31.

[2] 'The battle of English liberty has really been fought and won at Paris,' said the *Morning Chronicle*, the acknowledged organ of the Whig party. The *Times* spoke out more fiercely.

French administration were as anxiously watched as those of our own. The ministers of Charles were not less disliked in England than in France—and the danger which freedom incurred in consequence of their despotic plans, was felt as a danger common to liberal institutions in every part of the world.[1]

The indignation and terrors of the French people were soon justified. By some strange fatality, every

[1] Mr. Brougham's language at that time spoke the feelings of the people of England, and he thus, in the House of Commons, expressed his admiration of the resistance made to the arbitrary attempts of the king and his ministers. The words are taken from the *Mirror of Parliament*, and not from Lord Brougham's collected speeches.

'It has been said that the French know not how to value liberty; but I protest that I know of no nation on the face of the earth that knows how to value liberty more—that is better fitted for its possession—that knows better how to keep it, or to preserve it if others design to wrest it from their grasp. My heartfelt admiration—my cordial gratitude is due to the patriots of that great nation for the illustrious struggle they are making—for the war which they are now waging with arbitrary power—and which for the sake of the peace of France—of England—of Europe—most of all for the sake of the Bourbon king, I hope will not proceed beyond the point to which bigotry and bad counsels have already driven it. I hope that those counsels will yield in time to the coming breeze—at least before they be swept away by the gathering storm.—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 2886. *Lord Brougham's Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 154. There is a slight difference in the expression in the revised speech by which its force is lessened. On the 2nd of November, Mr. Brougham, not on the hustings, where great licence is supposed to be allowed and is certainly often taken, but in the House of Commons, spoke of 'that revolution which in my conscience I believe to be the most glorious in the annals of mankind.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. iv. p. 37.

French administration attempts to put down by prosecution such portions of the press as are opposed to them—and most of them have found courts and juries obsequious and obedient, condemnation usually attending the accusations made on the part of the administration. The new ministry followed this common plan, and endeavoured by vigorous measures to silence remark and opposition. The usual effect followed—opposition grew with persecution; the ill-will of the people was increased, and nothing was gained beyond the miserable pleasure of inflicting bodily and mental suffering upon the opponents of the government.

The terrors of the people took suddenly a definite form. A suspicion arose that as the ministers were known not to possess a majority in the Chambers, they were about to make an attempt to raise taxes without the consent of the legislature, and therefore contrary to law. To counteract this supposed project, a plan of associations was proposed, and very generally adopted, for the purpose of resisting the levying of taxes not sanctioned and imposed by the Chambers. This proposal, which was for a perfectly legal purpose, was prosecuted, under the pretext of its being an attack on the king. Papers which published the scheme were seized, and every effort to put down the plan, by punishing and silencing those who adopted it, was made—but in vain. The associations spread over the greater part of the kingdom, and were said to have included, not only more than half the Cham-

ber of Deputies, but also a considerable number of peers themselves.[1]

The struggle between the people and the ministry continued during the whole of the remaining part of the year, increasing the animosity on both sides. All were anxious for the assembling of the Chambers—by these alone the dispute could be constitutionally settled. It remained to be seen whether the ministry and the king would submit to this legal decision.

The Chambers were called together in March, 1830, and in answer to the speech from the throne, an address of uncompromising hostility to the administration was passed by a majority of 221 to 181. The king, in reply, stated that his intentions, as already declared in his speech, were *immutable*—and shortly after prorogued the Chambers to the 1st of September.

The interval was employed in preparing for a new election. The ministry having no intention of again meeting a Chamber thus openly and decidedly hostile, hoped that they could, by skilful arrangements, procure the return of one more friendly and more docile. The intentions of the ministry to dissolve the present body was instantly divined by all parties—every doubt being at once dispelled by the instructions of the administration given to the various public functionaries who could be made instrumental to the selection of

[1] These associations bore a great resemblance to the political unions of England which soon after appeared, but which do not seem to have been copies, but were suggested by the necessities of the times, like causes producing like effects.

candidates favourable to the present government. When everything was, in the opinion of the ministry, sufficiently prepared, the Chamber was dissolved, and the elections were ordered to take place in June and July, and the meeting of the new Chambers appointed for the 3rd of August. These preparations were met by the opposition party with equal activity, and with that skill in arrangement which distinguishes every class of the French people. The national feeling was too powerful for ministerial influence.

As the election business proceeded, changes occurred in the ministry, by which every trace of a liberal feeling amongst them was carefully removed. Nothing now remained to be done but to act upon the plans devised, and the orders given—instructions being sent to the heads of every department, and all persons in the employment of the government ordered to vote for the government candidates. The officials were said to have obeyed obsequiously these commands of their superiors. In spite, however, of all these precautions, the popular party, having the whole people—the instructed, the wealthy, as well as the poor, and the numerous classes of the nation—with them, succeeded in returning an immense majority of the Chambers pledged to oppose and punish the ministers who had attempted, in this bare-faced and illegal manner, to corrupt and control the electors, and to destroy the semblance even of a representative government. Of this result the government were fully aware—the victory could not be disputed—so that if

the ministry were resolved to retain their power, it was now clear they could do so only by subduing or putting aside the Chambers, and the law—attempting, in short, a revolution in favour of despotism.

The ministry, infatuated themselves, acting for an infatuated monarch, resolved to accept this alternative —determined to overthrow the constitution, and in the name of the king to trample upon the law. 'The moment,' they said, 'was come to have recourse to measures which are in the spirit of the charter, but which are beyond the limits of legal order, the resources of which have been exhausted in vain. Those measures, sire, your ministers, who are to secure the success of them, do not hesitate to propose to you, convinced as they are that justice will remain the strongest.' Such were the expressions with which they concluded a long memorial to the king, in which they professed to explain, for his information, the internal situation of the country and the dangers resulting from the periodical press. They declared that 'recent events proved that political passions, hitherto confined to the high places of society, begin to penetrate the depths of it and to stir up the popular classes.' They further declared that 'at all times, in fact, the periodical press has been, and it is in its nature to be, only an instrument of disorder and sedition.' Its effects, they asserted, 'were such as to create and maintain public discontent—dissension in the bosom of families which might, by degrees, throw back the nation to absolute barbarism,' and that

against these evils law and judicature were utterly helpless; they therefore proposed to overthrow the law and have recourse to force. This precious document was signed by all the ministers.

In accordance with this advice, the king consented to sanction certain *ordonnances* by which, simply on the strength of his royal prerogative, he suspended, or rather abrogated, the constitution. The nature of these *ordonnances* and the subjects against which they were directed, excited vehement suspicion in England, and contributed greatly to affect the popularity of our own administration. The first *ordonnance*, dated the 25th of July, 1830, abolished, in fact, the periodical press, and overthrew that which experience has taught us is the most efficient safeguard of freedom —viz., the liberty of *unlicensed printing*. By the first article of this *ordonnance* the liberty of the periodical press is declared to be suspended; by the second, it is ordered that no journal or periodical be published without the royal authority, which is to be renewed every three months; by the third, it is declared that, in the provinces, this authority is to be given by the prefects and sub-prefects; by the fourth, the types and property of persons publishing without such authority are declared confiscate, and ordered to be seized; by the fifth and sixth, it was ordered that no writing under twenty printed pages be printed without the authority of the Minister of the Interior in Paris, of the prefects in the provinces; and that no work of above twenty pages, whether legal process,

memoires, or scientific paper, shall be published without authority. In fine, the power of printing and publishing upon any subject was utterly destroyed. This *ordonnance* was signed by the king and countersigned by the ministers.

Another *ordonnance* was issued at the same time, dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, giving as a reason the culpable manœuvres that had been practised in various parts of the kingdom with respect to the late elections, and in order to prevent a recurrence of these said improper proceedings, the king, by another edict, entirely remodelled the whole electoral system—the object and effect of which new plan were to restrict the number of electors and throw the whole power of election into the hands of the government authorities.[1]

These royal decrees were published on the 26th of July, and before the end of the month, the elder race of the Bourbons had ceased to reign in France. The publication of these obnoxious edicts acted as a spark upon a charged mine—the whole system of government was at once, by the fierce explosion, utterly destroyed, and the foolish king paid with his crown for the folly he had sanctioned, and his ministers with their liberty for many years for the advice which they had given.

The conduct of the French nation was in England

[1] This *ordonnance* consists of thirty articles, which minutely describe the mode of proceeding by which the effect described in the text is to be obtained. Any exposition of that mode of proceeding is here unnecessary.

greeted with one universal shout of admiration—unbounded praise was bestowed not only on the courage and skill with which the people of Paris rose upon and expelled their delinquent king, but also on the wisdom and clemency which accompanied their heroic victory. When the news first came of the insurrection by an armed populace, and of the combats in the streets and places of that great city, which had witnessed within the memory of many then living the most terrible and sanguinary proceedings to be found in the history of the world, a sort of instinctive terror took possession of men's minds, and they trembled lest the cause of freedom and good government should be again disgraced by the horrors and cruelty which had accompanied the first revolution. But Paris of 1830 was not the Paris of 1789. The results of the terrible convulsion which had, at that period, desolated France, and filled her cities and fields with carnage, misery, and terror, were now seen in the beneficial change which was manifest in the habits and feelings of her people. As merciful as they were brave, the heroes of 1830 tarnished not the lustre of their great victory by any ferocity, either while in hot blood resisting to the death the violent decrees of their infatuated king, or, after their victory, by the forms of law or by means of a subservient judicature. Law immediately resumed her place, indeed, but it was a law of mercy and of wisdom. Order was re-established the moment that the royal family was expelled. The Chambers, like our convention in 1688, decided for the people, and again established monarchy in the

person of the chief of the younger branch of the Bourbons, by conferring the crown upon the Duke of Orleans, who, by the name of Louis-Philippe, was created King of the French.

The revolution which had proved thus successful at Paris, was a signal for the opponents to existing authority in every European community to rise in revolt against the government—and men most dissimilar in character, views, and principles found themselves suddenly united under the captivating title of the friends of freedom and enemies of despotism. The danger that lurked under, and was hidden by these specious names, was not at the moment thought of, but quickly became manifest, when success attended resistance to authority. Every government, whether despotic or not, counts among its enemies a host of evil disposed and ruthless desperadoes. These men take advantage of every opportunity which is offered to them, to resist, to weaken, and if possible to destroy, not simply the faulty government of which good men complain, but in fact all authority, all law;—what they desire is confusion, hoping by its means to escape control and punishment, and to acquire wealth without labour or care. Thus it happens, that the most virtuous and holy cause runs the risk of being injured by an association with vice, which is inevitable. Thus also it happens, that every violent revolution, the most wise, as well as the most mischievous, is always followed by what is called a *reaction*—and the good that may have been obtained is dearly paid for, by continued, unnecessary trouble, commotion, alarm,

and, consequently, by a destruction of property, and the misery which attends on want. The successful resistance in Paris, to the soldiers of Charles X., excited the populace of every large town in Europe. Among this populace in every town, there were many desperate, noisy malcontents, who joined their voices to those who had real grievances to complain of, and urged the unwary and discontented to open and violent resistance. The more real the grievances complained of, and the more bitter and vehement the honest anger felt by the suffering people, the more sure was the game of these worthless wretches, who traded in the business of revolutions. Bands of these ruffians wandered over Europe for base purposes, stirring up discontent to open violence—injuring that sacred cause for which they pretended veneration—and riveting the very despotism against which they affected to combat. The success of the Parisians, in no place created greater excitement and enthusiasm than in Brussels—and no people at that time ran greater risk of danger from a mischievous fellowship with revolutionary desperadoes than the good burghers of Flanders. The conduct of the King of the Netherlands had given them legitimate cause of complaint;—they were, besides, a people joined against their will to another with whom they had no sympathy—from whom they differed in religion and in language, and towards whom they had for ages entertained bitter feelings of jealous rivalry. By their alliance with Holland, the Belgians considered themselves injured and insulted—they were saddled with a heavy debt—

they were, being catholics, subjected to a protestant dynasty. In the distribution of honours and emolument, their gentry saw themselves set aside for the more favoured Dutch ;—the law was administered in a language, with which they were just enough familiar to despise and hate it;—in short, Belgium at that period exhibited in herself that most unmanageable of all political entities, an insulted as well as injured *nationality*. Had this feeling of nationality not entered into the dispute, the discontent of the people would never probably have gone beyond complaint; now, however, the animosity among every class of the population became a violent national hostility, ready, nay anxious, to employ war itself as a means of escape from a connexion which they deemed a degradation. The King of the Netherlands was a man of a narrow and bigoted spirit. He really hated the Belgians as they hated him, and was ever betraying a puerile partiality for everything Dutch in his dominions. But the Belgians, if united, were a majority in the second chamber; and the king by his folly contrived to unite against himself parties, which, except in that solitary instance, have ever been divided by the bitterness of theological hate.

The people of Belgium are eminently Catholic—with the exception of the poor Irish, they are probably the most devoutly Catholic of any people in Europe. But as there was a Young France, so was there a Young Belgium. This latter party spoke French as their native language—their literature was French, and their estimation of religion, more espe-

cially of the Catholic religion, was that entertained by Young France, who, in this instance at least, received their inspiration from Voltaire, and the class of whom the patriarch of Ferney was the chief. But this Young Belgium differed widely from the immense majority of the Belgian population—over whom the Catholic priesthood exercised an almost unlimited dominion—and to a very large portion of whom the language and literature of France were and are utterly unknown. Had the King of the Netherlands taken advantage of these circumstances, he might easily have prevented a union between parties so willing to be hostile. But instead of adopting this plain and easy policy, he proved to the Belgian people that he was himself a bigoted Protestant as well as Dutchman, to whom the whole Belgian population were equally a subject of dislike. Thereupon the priests saw in him only a persecuting Protestant. The Liberals looked upon him as a despot imposed on them by the Holy Alliance. The hostile Belgic parties became united against him and his country, and seized on every opportunity which chance gave them of thwarting and foiling his administration.

The budget of the country was, by a rule of their policy, voted for ten years. A revision, therefore, of their civil list occurs at each decennial period. This revision happened in 1830, and the ministerial budget had been rejected by the second chamber, the Belgian deputies having united for that purpose. The national, *Belgic* feeling overruled all calculations of

personal interest, and many government functionaries were numbered in the obnoxious majority.

They were in consequence of their vote dismissed —a proceeding which in England would create no surprise. But another case occurred which our notions of parliamentary dependence would certainly not justify. The deputy of Namur had voted against the ministry. He enjoyed a pension for services formerly rendered to the state of Belgium. Elected by the people of Namur to represent them in the second chamber, he in the performance of his duty, and evidently with the approbation of his constituents, voted in opposition to the budget, and was, therefore, deprived of his pension.

These proceedings created great discontent throughout the Belgian provinces. All classes, and all parties united now to organise their opposition, not simply to the ministry, but to the king, and against Holland. As yet, however, no direct steps were taken to separate the two countries, every effort for the moment being directed to the one point of uniting, and keeping united, the whole Belgian portion of the so-called united kingdom. The most active partizan in this scheme of Belgian unity was M. de Potter, who aspired to be the O'Connell of Belgium. At the time of this unwise attempt of the king and his ministry to put down the Belgian opposition, M. de Potter was in prison for a libel on the government, which, though it subjected him to punishment, gained for him, nevertheless, great popularity. In principle he was a republican, and

belonged to the *Liberals* of Belgium—that is, to Young Belgium. But all distinctions of this description were for the time forgotten, and M. de Potter, though a republican, and no friend of the priesthood, was hailed as the great leader of the people and nationality of Belgium. He was not slow to take advantage of the folly of the king. The dismissed deputies were at once declared martyrs suffering for the honour and happiness and independence of Belgium, for whom M. de Potter proposed to raise a national subscription. The real object was not hidden under this thin disguise. The pretence was to raise money throughout the whole country for the suffering deputies. The real purpose was to create an organized machinery of opposition and revolution, which should extend to every part of the country. The committee which received these subscriptions was, in fact, a revolutionary government. They communicated by means of district committees with every town and hamlet in Belgium—under the name of subscriptions for the dismissed deputies they obtained, or proposed to obtain, large funds for ulterior objects—and by their organization they sought to create and to maintain a steadfast opposition to the government. On the 3rd of February, 1830, M. de Potter, being then in prison, addressed his countrymen through certain of the newspapers,[1] laying before them in detail a

[1] These were the *Courier des Pays Bas, Le Belge,* and *Le Catholique.* This last consenting to publish M. de Potter's

scheme of what he called Belgic confederation. The extent and daring of this scheme, the specific nature of the details set forth, and the universal sympathy expressed by the people, and their eagerness to join in the plan, alarmed the legal functionaries of the king, and induced them to prosecute all who had contributed to publish it. M. de Potter being in prison was already in their hands. The other editors, however—M. Vanderstracten, editor of *Le Belge*, and M. Bartels, of the *Catholique*—were at liberty. They were immediately arrested, together with M. de Neve, the printer of *Le Catholique*, and also M. Tielmans, an advocate and friend of M. de Potter. Not content with arresting these persons, the law officers seized various papers belonging to M. Tielmans, and by that means got possession of a correspondence which had been carried on between M. de Potter and himself. From these the Crown lawyers hoped at first to establish a charge of treason against M. de Potter and his correspondent. The evidence, however, was not in the end deemed sufficient to substantiate this capital charge: that of sedition was, therefore, preferred. Before the trial took place above a thousand petitions were presented to the Chambers in favour of the prisoners. These petitions came from every hamlet in the country. They were openly carried about by the priests, who

---

letter, proves that the catholic party was deeply involved in the scheme. M. de Potter was himself proprietor of *Le Courier des Pays Bas.*

solicited signatures to them on behalf of the martyrs about to suffer for the people and for Belgium. The Chamber marked its opinion respecting these petitions by resolving to receive them, by a majority of eighty-eight to eleven. And this majority was not wholly Belgian—so strong was the feeling against the folly and injustice of the ministry, that many of the Dutch members joined with the Belgian deputies in thus evincing their disapprobation of the whole ministerial conduct in the matter.

The trial of the accused for sedition commenced on the 16th of April, and lasted till the 30th. The trial was by the judges, *unaided by a jury*, and as all men foresaw, three of the accused were found guilty—MM. de Potter, Bartels, and Tielmans—the others were acquitted.

Here was everything to excite the liberal and the catholic Belgic population. First, the plan for which they (the accused) were to be punished, was by the whole people deemed not simply justifiable, but in the highest degree praiseworthy and necessary. Next, the accused were not convicted by a jury of their country, but by hostile, partisan judges—men who were afraid to be just, even had they desired to be so. The fact for which M. de Potter and his friends were being tried, was for endeavouring to shield and support functionaries who had resisted the Court. If these judges were to acquit the accused, they might soon expect themselves to be subject to the indignation of the same authority, and visited in the same

way with punishment. Then, moreover, among the persons peculiarly selected for punishment was the organ of the catholic party in Belgium, M. Bartels. The vengeance of the king and his ministry was directed not merely against liberty, but against catholicism.

M. de Potter was banished from the kingdom of the Netherlands for eight years; MM. Bartels and Tielmans for seven. When the exiles endeavoured to find refuge first in France, next in Prussia, they were refused admittance to either kingdoms, a cruelty which served only to exasperate the people yet more, because it was believed to have been evinced at the solicitation of the Dutch king.

The excitement of the people and the conduct of the Chambers alarmed the king and his ministers: they modified their budget, after having punished those who had voted against their original proposal, and then presented it for acceptance to the Chamber. The Chamber, with that good sense which has marked almost every act of this legislature, accepted and passed the modified measure. The obnoxious items had for the most part been expunged. The constitutional victory had been gained, and the point for which they had striven being conceded, they passed the decennial budget. This the last united legislative body of the kingdom of the Netherlands was dissolved on the close of their session, which took place on the 2nd of June. The general election which immediately followed, was supposed to have

added to the power of the administration, and the friends of Dutch connexion fancied that all dangers were passed, and that when the new parliament should meet the Belgic party would find themselves reduced to a helpless minority. But the days of July came in the midst of their security. The people of Brussels were excited by the doings of their brethren of Paris. Emissaries from France were quickly seen actively employed in exciting the Belgian hostility to Dutch domination. French statesmen hoped again to gain possession of Antwerp, and to make Belgium a province of France. A party in Belgium still remembered and regretted the old days of the Empire, and hoped to share in the splendour and power of the great French nation. They, however, did not openly avow these wishes, because the majority of the nation sought for a separate nationality. The catholic priesthood dreaded the French—they feared their infidelity. On the one side was the Dutch king, a protestant bigot—on the other, the French, or rather the Parisians, with the bigotry of their infidelity. Which power was most to be dreaded they could hardly determine; they sought, therefore, in the turmoil that followed, to keep steadily before the people of Belgium the flattering idea of their own nationality. They managed with admirable skill to enlist all the eager enthusiasm and vanity of the educated Belgian youth on the side of this opinion, and succeeded at length in placing on the head of Leopold the independent crown of Belgium. This result, however, was not easily obtained, and many and various were

the dangers and the sufferings of the people, and great the difficulties of their leaders, before this final victory of their skill and prudence was won.

On the 25th of August, a riot began in Brussels: fighting followed, and the scenes of Paris were enacted over again. A series of negotiations and intrigues followed. Liege followed the example of Brussels, and at length the real wish of the Belgian people was expressed by formally demanding a separation from Holland. Actual war eventually broke out, and the forces of the king were step by step forced out of the kingdom, till at length nothing of Belgium remained to him but the citadel of Antwerp.[1]

On the 13th of September, the king convened an extraordinary meeting of the States General, but by this time all hopes of any arrangement between the two people had disappeared. The Dutch as well as the Belgians were heartily tired of the connexions, and nothing now gave them a semblance of unity but the one Crown to which they were both subject. Two parties mutually disgusted were not likely to propose or arrange any means of an amicable solution of their difficulties. In this hopeless condition of his affairs, the king determined to seek assistance from his allies.

The powers of Europe were asked to interfere in the dispute; M. Van de Weyer being sent by the provisional government to England, in order to obtain the

[1] Any detailed history of these events would be out of place here. The results, as stated in the text, are all that are needed for the understanding of our own politics.

intervention of England, was told by the Duke of Wellington, that England would not interfere in their affairs so as to control the people in the choice of a government; but that we desired much the establishment of a government by which peace and good order might be maintained; and that as respected hostilities, England was ready to aid in putting an end to the present disastrous state of things. A protocol was consequently signed, on the 4th of November, by the ministers of five powers represented in London, by which an entire cessation of hostilities was required; and to that end they determined that 'the respective troops should retire reciprocally behind the line which previously to the treaty of May 30, 1814, separated the possessions of the sovereign of the United Provinces from those which were added to his territory to form the kingdom of the Netherlands, by the treaty of Paris and by those of Paris and Vienna, in 1815. This was required to be done in ten days. Eventually, by this arrangement, the king of Holland was required and compelled to evacuate Antwerp, and the Belgian territory was retained in its entirety for the king who was eventually selected to rule over that country.

The people, however, in the meantime, through the provisional government, had summoned a national congress. On the 16th of October, a decree of the provisional government issued, by which a congress was convoked, and the manner of electing it determined. On the 10th of November it met.

Such was the state of Belgian affairs, when, at the end of October, the parliament of England was called

together. The Dutch king was driven from every part of Belgium, with the exception of the citadel of Antwerp. A protocol of the five powers had required a cessation of hostilities and that the hostile armies should be withdrawn, each from the territories of its opponent; and the Duke of Wellington signified to the minister of the provisional government, M. Van de Weyer, that he desired not to interfere with the government which the people of Belgium chose to adopt.

In Germany the excitement which was communicated by the French revolution did not extend beyond some of the minor states, and the changes and disturbances which followed, caused little or no sensation in England. The insurrection, also, which in the end of the year broke out in Poland, had little effect upon our politics at home. The hatred to Russia and her dominion was very general in England, and the good wishes of nearly all classes attended the Poles, in their attempts to cast off the hated thraldom of that cruel dominion. But beyond good wishes our feelings did not go. Poland was in no way connected with England. We had promised her people nothing; we had asked from them, we had received from them, no assistance. We gave their exiles a shelter beyond the reach of any despot's arm; we fed them in their necessities. But we had never said that we would raise up unto them a kingdom, and make them again a nation; we had never taken advantage of their warlike enthusiasm, nor reaped benefit from their heroism

and their valour. From us, therefore, they had nothing to hope: neither could they impute to us any breach of faith, any base or dishonourable deception. Their misfortunes excited our sympathy, their mistaken heroism demanded and received our admiration. But between our fortunes and theirs no tie or connexion existed. We sorrowed when they failed, but silently acquiesced in the decree of fate by which they were overwhelmed.

With Portugal, however, we had more intimate political relations, though the popular interest was small in the fortunes either of her princes or her people. A very general contempt, indeed, was felt for the character of the Portuguese nation. They were regarded as a degraded and degenerate race, incapable of rescuing themselves from the thraldom of a miserable despot, and were, therefore, by our self-relying countrymen, looked upon with contemptuous indifference. The policy which permitted Dom Miguel to seize upon the royal power and name, and to exclude the legitimate heir from her rightful dominion, was generally viewed with suspicion and dislike. If the hated miscreant has outwitted you, said our people to the government, you are most inefficient diplomatists, and utterly unfit to wield the power of a great nation; if, on the other hand, you have connived at his doings, if you have looked on in calm acquiescence, while he has been guilty of atrocities only equalled by the exaggerated stories of the cruelties perpetrated by the Roman Cæsars, then, indeed, there are not words of indigna-

tion and horror which are sufficiently strong to mark accurately the intense loathing and disgust which arise in our minds upon the bare contemplation of such disgraceful connivance. For the people, as a people, we care little, but we are solicitous about the honour of our own nation; and that honour is tarnished, and our great name is lowered, when, under the sanction of our authority, human nature is shocked and horror-stricken by the infernal cruelties of this effeminate and cowardly miscreant.

This extraordinary state of the continent affected the whole of English society. In some it created fear, in some hope, in almost all a desire of change —but for very different reasons. The immense majority of the wealthy of the land had no interest in bad government, nor in the continuance of the old system of representation. So long, however, as they believed that system requisite for the safety of their property, they stood by it; but when they learned to think that its anomalies were not benefits, and that a much simpler, more rational, and fairer plan could be devised, they desired to reform it, because, by so doing, they would remove one great cause of discontent, and reconcile the great body of the labouring population to the institutions of the country. They perceived that the revolution at Paris had greatly excited the hopes and the enthusiasm of these classes; and they dreaded, and wished by timely concessions to avert, commotion. They looked, however, with suspicion on the Duke

of Wellington and his government, believing that he sympathised rather with the despot who had been foiled, than with the people who had so courageously withstood him. They also feared his stubborn will, because they thought that it would induce him to resist the demands of the people for that reform which they themselves deemed not unreasonable. The conduct of the government, also, was unfortunately calculated in one respect to arouse suspicion, and when connected with the late events in France, to excite alarm also. The king, however, was personally popular, and looked upon as a person in whose mind no scheme of despotism could enter, whose temper was too frank and jovial to permit him to desire oppressive rule, and whose capacity was too narrow to enable him to devise a scheme for the attainment of it. The suspicion and distrust occasioned by the conduct of the King of France and his advisers, did not therefore affect King William himself; but his ministers were not estimated after the same fashion. They were believed unfriendly to a free press, and were supposed to have found in Sir James Scarlett an Attorney-General who was not only willing but eager to employ the law as an engine of oppression. During the late session of parliament, the conduct of Sir James Scarlett had been severely scrutinized, and blame by persons of every party abundantly bestowed upon him, for his arbitrary, persecuting prosecutions of Mr. Alexander, the editor of the *Morning Journal;* and the French ministers were

thought to have adopted the principles of Sir James Scarlett, only employing them on a larger scale and with a bolder hand. But still the principles on which they acted were deemed the same as those upon which he had acted; and the similitude excited no common alarm—no ordinary indignation, which were also greatly enhanced by the peculiar personal position of Sir James Scarlett himself, who was very commonly supposed to be a renegade Whig. Many, even distinguished members of that party, did not scruple to accuse him of having deserted the men with whom he had all his previous life cordially co-operated, and the principles which he had constantly and even warmly espoused. These accusations were only partially true; but they were for the Whig party eminently useful, and for the ministry as eminently mischievous. They were only partially true, inasmuch as Sir James Scarlett could hardly be considered to have deserted his party;—that he had deserted his principles, could not well be doubted.

When Sir Charles Wetherell rebelled against his chief, and rose as Attorney-General to make a fierce attack upon the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and the measure of emancipation which they as ministers of the Crown had proposed, it was evident that the learned and indignant gentleman had resolved to relinquish his office, as it was impossible for him to serve those whom he had so violently assailed. The office which he thus relinquished was offered to Sir James Scarlett, and

by him accepted, with the approbation of the leading Whigs. Sir James thus a second time became Attorney-General. The first time of his holding that office was when Mr. Canning, being deserted by his old associates and colleagues, had been obliged to make Sir John Copley Lord Chancellor, to appoint a new Master of the Rolls, and a new Attorney-General; Mr. Scarlett, acting with his friends, then joined Mr. Canning, and became his Attorney-General. He so continued till the Whigs were unceremoniously ejected by the king, in order to make way for the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel. But in 1829 the anger of the Whig party had subsided; they were converted into friends of the administration by the proposed plan of catholic emancipation.

When, therefore, Sir James Scarlett was asked to resume his old office in place of Sir Charles Wetherell, the Whigs were well pleased that he should accept the offer, and be a sort of forerunner of the whole party of his friends, who hourly expected to follow him. Coming into office just at the very height of the anti-catholic fury, Sir James found his new chiefs, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst, and Mr. Peel, the butt of every protestant arrow, exposed daily to all the accusations which furious bigotry and rancorous theological hate and ingenuity could invent, and inventing dared to publish. Among the most noisy of these accusers were the writers of a paper called the *Morning Journal*, the editor of which was a Mr. Alexander. In this paper, violent invectives every day appeared, and certain charges

were brought against the Lord Chancellor which demanded investigation. The new Attorney-General hastened to defend his chiefs, and punish their accuser. He proceeded first in behalf of the Lord Chancellor, who had been accused of having received a bribe from Sir Edward Sugden; and of having, in return for that bribe, advanced Sir Edward to the high office of Solicitor-General.

In consequence of this scandalous accusation, Sir James Scarlett, on behalf of Lord Lyndhurst, as a private person, and not as Lord Chancellor, moved for a criminal information against Mr. Alexander. In showing cause why this information should not be granted, Mr. Denman, as counsel for Mr. Alexander, stated, that the Attorney-General, who had, on behalf of the Lord Chancellor, moved the court for a criminal information, had done so from fear; that he dared not file an *ex officio* information, which was the fair course of proceeding, but had pusillanimously sought to shelter himself under the sanction of the court.'[1] This most unintelligible assertion was attended by another as offensive as this was unmeaning. 'Mr. Denman observed that other eminent Lord Chancellors had deemed it sufficient to rely upon their characters against any attacks of the press, but that Lord Lyndhurst was under the necessity of coming before the court to vindicate his.'[2] As the criminal

[1] These are the words of Sir James Scarlett, in replying to Sir Charles Wetherell in the House of Commons [March 2, 1830; see *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 507], and stated by him to give the substance of Mr. Denman's accusation. [2] Idem. ibid.

information was applied for on affidavit, which of necessity denied the truth of the libel, it is difficult to understand the meaning of Mr. Denman's taunt of cowardice on the part either of the Attorney-General or his client. Nevertheless, the Attorney-General stated that partly in consequence of it, he immediately filed an *ex officio* information, and abandoned the rule he had already obtained. The proceeding so far appears perfectly justifiable, though perhaps not altogether wise. Under the information, Mr. Alexander must have been convicted, and no imputation of unfairness could have been justly made. Sir Charles Wetherell, however, fiercely attacked the Attorney-General in the House of Commons, describing the whole proceeding 'as contrary to all precedent, and to the spirit of the constitution.' This opinion was rather the offspring of the furious and blinding rage which at that moment possessed Sir Charles, than of the good sense and fairness which usually characterized the conduct, if not all the sayings, of the ex-Attorney-General.[1] The whole of the subsequent conduct of the Attorney-General in these cases was, however, fairly open to severe animadversion, and deservedly brought odium on the government which permitted the oppression of which he was

[1] Few men in the profession of which he was so distinguished a member have left behind them a higher reputation than Sir Charles Wetherell for unspotted integrity, and high-minded gentlemanly bearing and demeanour in his whole conduct at the bar.

accused. A second *ex officio* information was filed against the editor and proprietors of the paper, because an article in it charged the Duke of Wellington with being an ambitious, unprincipled, and dangerous minister, and with keeping his Majesty under degrading and unconstitutional control, and his Majesty with being a king who could be so controlled. This was described as a libel on the king and his government. Not content with this, another, that is, a third, *ex officio* information was filed against the same defendants for a libel 'tending to degrade the king, and bring his government into contempt, and inflame the minds of his Majesty's subjects against both Houses of parliament.' Even this did not satisfy the appetite of the Attorney-General. He proceeded in a fourth case by preferring an indictment against the printer of the *Morning Journal* for a libel, which appeared as a letter addressed to the editor of the paper, and which accused the Duke 'of despicable cant, and affected moderation'—of showing 'a want of mercy, compassion, and of those more kindly and tender sympathies which distinguish the heart of a man from that of a proud dictator and tyrant.' The libel also charged the Duke with being guilty 'of the grossest treachery to his country, or else the most arrant cowardice, or treachery, cowardice, and artifice united.' And all this rodomontade was indulged in, and nonsense uttered, because the Duke had proposed and carried the act for the emancipation of the catholics. No sooner was this indictment preferred

than the real author declared himself; and his situation fully explained why the raving and rant had been used against the Duke of Wellington, the author being domestic chaplain to the devout, and protestant, and virtuous Duke of Cumberland! The declaration of the name and character of the actual author did not at all affect the course pursued by the Attorney-General; he still pursued the printer, and allowed the parson to remain unmolested.

There is nothing to be said for any of these defendants — they were mere mercenary traders in anonymous and vulgar abuse, and never, spite of their pretended anxiety respecting one peculiar *form* of religion, prayed to God to 'keep their tongues from evil speaking, lying, and slandering.' Mr. Alexander, in answer to the Lord Chancellor's affidavit, swore that the Lord Chancellor was not the person alluded to in the corrupt transaction mentioned in the libel. This every one saw was not consonant with the defence made for Mr. Alexander by his counsel, Mr. Denman; and most persons believed that the denial was hazarded, not because it was true, but because it was supposed the best means of escaping from the consequences that might follow the lie of the libel. But when the world saw that the whole power of the government, through the instrumentality of its chief law officer, was brought to bear in this wholesale and vindictive fashion against a hostile paper, a suspicion arose, and daily grew stronger, that the government wanted only the power, not the will, to put down free

discussion. Many years had not passed since great danger had attended the freedom of the press—gagging bills were not forgotten, and it was suspected that, if a fair opportunity were to offer itself, the obsequiousness of parliament might be tested by proposals, first for the suppression of all discussion which might, from its form and cheapness, reach the poor, and therefore the numerous classes of society—and when this first step was safely and firmly made, that the next would be an attempt to put down every other species of observation hostile to the government. When these suspicions were afloat—when the memory of this persecution of the press by a so-called renegade Whig Attorney-General was fresh—the great *coup-d'état* attempted by the friend and supposed follower and disciple of the Duke of Wellington—viz., M. de Polignac, came to give plausibility and strength to the preconceptions of the public mind—and when the Whig organ, the *Morning Chronicle*, declared that 'the battle of English liberty had really been fought in Paris,' a sincere, earnest, and almost anxious assent was given to the assertion.[1]

But while such was the state of alarm and suspicion of the more wealthy classes, and such the influence upon them of the revolution in France,

[1] And although we now can look calmly on the events of that period, and certainly find it impossible to believe what was then believed of the Duke of Wellington and his ministry, the people had good reason to be alarmed. The manifestoes of the Tory party of those days were all couched in the most vehement phrases of despotism. Charles X. was declared by them to be entirely in the right, and every act of the revolution of 1789

very different indeed was its effect upon the poorer classes of the country and the towns—classes which, though both ranged under the one name of labourers, are totally different in the degree of their instruction, and consequently in their habits of thought, feeling, and conduct; and in any description of the feelings of the people generally, the labouring inhabitants of the country and the towns must be carefully distinguished.

The success of the popular insurrection in Paris exercised a strange and mysterious influence upon the minds of the illiterate, unthinking peasantry of our agricultural counties. Of what had really taken place in that successful outbreak against established authority, these ignorant people knew actually nothing. The rumour reached them of some great change having taken place, a change, as they were told, by which the lowly and the poor were suddenly raised to eminence and power. The rich they heard had been defeated, and that all distinctions in society had ceased to exist. The happy state of which they had so often dreamed and talked, a state in which there were no rich and no poor, in which all were equal, and all equally happy, they fancied had at length arrived: nor did they doubt but that they themselves also might become

---

to have been utterly unjustifiable. Among these unjustifiable acts was specially classed the suppression of the horrible feudality of France, and M. Cottu's plan for a dictatorship was lauded as the true and only just mode of governing that country. —See *Quarterly Review*, 1830, No. LXXXVI. p. 564, *et seq.*

sharers in this new-found felicity, if they were to put forth their strength, and imitate the bright example of the people of France. The uneducated and ignorant and wretched are but too apt to look with envy and hate upon those endowed with wealth, and to believe their own misery caused by their happier brethren.

The rich against whom this hatred is directed may have done nothing to deserve it. On the contrary, they may be good and charitable, active in their kindness, unpresuming, and simply and virtuously enjoying the fruits of an honest, well-deserving industry. Nevertheless, the poor are of necessity little aware of the sympathy which is, in fact, felt for them. The distance is so great between the rich and the poor; the habits which different positions in life create are so opposite to each other, that few are the moments in the poor man's life, in which he is brought into communion with any rich man. In the village, in the town even, in the great mercantile and manufacturing city, the one class is born, lives, struggles, dies, separate from, unknown to the other. For a moment, by some accident, a member of the one class may be brought into some sort of society with the other. Coming suddenly together, they are unable to understand each other; good intentions are misconstrued, kind words are misapprehended; and what might be thought a fortunate meeting, may, in fact, engender hate, or increase it, if already existing, on one side, dislike or disgust on the other. The rural

gentry are eminently distinguished in England by their sincere desire to fulfil their duties to the poor. They have the wish to do good, though perhaps they may not always possess the requisite knowledge or the requisite means. This kindness, also, seldom with them takes an offensive form. It is really a downright honest, active wish to be useful. Of every day many hours are devoted to the performance of neighbourly duties; and by none so willingly, continuously, and earnestly are the duties performed as by the wives and daughters of the gentry. In the year 1830, this spirit was as active as at the present moment, and yet no sooner did the rumour come among the people, of the wonderful revolution by which the poor had been raised to power in France, than at once the slumbering jealousy and hate dwelling in the minds of the rural population burst forth in deeds of open violence, or hidden mischief. The want then felt was not in reality greater than usual—wages were the same[1]—employment was little, if at all less, and the price of provisions was by no means

[1] In every case of a riot, or large meeting of these insurgent labourers, a demand was made by them for higher wages, and they declared that they would be satisfied with 2*s.* 6*d.* per day; in some instances 2*s.* 3*d.* was demanded. The ordinary rate of wages in the southern counties, then and now (1849), was and is 1*s.* 6*d.* They never said wages had declined; we know they have not risen beyond 1*s.* 6*d.* It is clear, then, that low wages, that is, lower wages than common, was not the cause of the extraordinary outbreak. That was, in fact, caused by the *rumour* of the doings in France.

high. Yet large mobs were collected in Kent, Sussex, Hants, and Wiltshire—in fact, generally throughout the southern counties. Against the force of the government these mobs were powerless. They had not intelligence to use arms, had they possessed them, and they were utterly unarmed. Excited as if by some spell the people had collected together, and their ignorant anger was directed against the small attempts at machinery, which had at that period been made by the southern farmer. They proceeded openly to destroy the threshing machines, which in that part of the country were only then coming into use, and satisfied their long-repressed feelings by secretly and at night setting fire to the stacks of corn upon which the machines would probably have been employed. Their belief was, that the threshing machines by abridging labour did them mischief; but then, with that wild contradiction which ever distinguishes these mad sallies of unreasoning hate, they burned the corn from which they desired to obtain labour, and by which certainly they were to be fed. Their anger respecting threshing machines was not wonderful. Most of the persons who were at the pains of teaching them held the same opinions as to the evil effects of machinery, and to this hour throughout the populous regions of our manufacturing districts abuse of machinery, and dissertations on the evil it does to the labouring man, are not only the most successful of the commonplaces of the mob orator and popular demagogue, but

are too commonly the topic of angry complaint by the benevolent gentry.[1] The general firing of the corn stacks, however, proved that there was something more in the feelings then in action than a desire to obtain work. The burning stack gave no work, but did give vent to passion—to that hate which, unhappily, too constantly lies about the ignorant and wretched poor man's heart, and which makes him, while he mourns over his own misery, wish to bring down all others to the same sad level of distress. Hate—not Want—thus expressed itself.[2]

While the labourers under the instigation of

[1] Hunt and Cobbett always raved against machinery.

[2] Sir Robert Peel, speaking of the causes of these incendiary fires, thus expresses his opinion respecting them—an opinion worthy of all respect, as he had certainly the best evidence the case afforded, but in which I find it impossible to acquiesce:—'It is a gross error to suppose that the disturbance in a neighbouring county is local. Its object, I have no doubt, is general; the fires constituting its overt acts, are neither executed by the hands nor devised by the heads of the peasantry of the county of Kent. No suspicion attaches to the resident population; the whole of the matter, whatever may be its origin, has been devised by other heads than theirs, and proceeds upon principles not local, but general. Up to the present moment, however, no detection has taken place.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, vol. iv. p. 156. Looking back to those times, our wonder is indeed excited by finding party-spirit attributing these proceedings of an ignorant peasantry to their discontent, raised by the continuance of the Tory administration in office, and to the conduct of parliament respecting the civil list.—See Mr. Denison's speech, Nov. 15, 1830, *Mirror of Parliament*. These poor creatures had probably never heard the words civil list, and certainly never understood their meaning, even if they ever did hear them.

these evil feelings wrought mischief, and spread insecurity and alarm over the land, they who were in immediate authority over them did much to increase the evil by countenancing their doctrines. The country magistrates were terrified by this sudden outbreak of the peasant population, and sought to make friends of these misguided men, by declaiming against the low rate of wages given by the farmers, and in some instances by assuming illegally the power to fix the rate of wages in their respective parishes. They thus taught the labourers to believe that low wages were caused by the employers, and that the existence of low wages might fairly be imputed to the employer as a fault, and they gave the working men to understand that wages could be regulated by law. The inculcation of such a doctrine by those who were from their position teachers of the people, was an evil far greater than the riots and the burnings which induced the country gentlemen to be guilty of this egregious folly and wickedness. Fortunately, the government of the country was wiser than these subordinate authorities. The Home Secretary wisely on the 8th of December despatched a circular to the justices of the peace throughout the country, warning them that they were transgressing both the law of the land and that of common sense, when they took upon themselves to establish a rate of wages. 'The magistrates,' said this letter,[1] 'have no power to settle

[1] Lord Melbourne was then Home Secretary, and is fairly entitled to the credit of having had the courage to tell a disagree-

the amount of wages, and any interference in such a matter can only have the effect of exciting expectations which must be disappointed, and of ultimately producing, in an aggravated degree, a renewed spirit of discontent and insubordination.'

While among the poor peasants of the agricultural districts there was this strong though vague expectation of change beneficial to themselves, bringing with it a sort of mystical millennium, among the more educated labourers of the manufacturing towns—the trading, manufacturing, and mercantile classes—the desire and hope of change took definite, though in the instance of each class very different shapes. The object of all these classes was to obtain political power—that power they believed necessary to their well-being—and all eagerly endeavoured either to persuade or to force the aristocracy to share their peculiar privileges with them who made the demand. The manner and extent of this demand by each class brought out a peculiar result. The nearer the class was to the aristocracy in wealth and importance, the smaller was the demand:—each thought of himself and his class; but the shopkeeper could not ask for political power, and exclude at the same time from the

able truth, at the right, though a very disagreeable time. The reader will find some very apposite and excellent remarks on this subject in the *Annual Retrospect of Public Affairs*, in the year 1831, published in the *Cabinet Library*, vol. ii. p. 199. Some of the events mentioned in the text occurred after the dissolution of the Duke of Wellington's ministry, but as they illustrate the condition of the popular mind previous to that event, they are here alluded to.

enjoyment of that privilege the rich merchant or manufacturer—he might, however, and did, often neglect those poorer than himself—viz., the labourer, or as he was called, the operative. The operative had no one below him; therefore his demand, including all above himself in wealth, appeared the most generous, as it was in reality most inclusive and extensive. The rich merchant and manufacturer, who in wealth equalled the landed proprietor, was galled by the distinction drawn between his substance and his position, and that of the landed gentry;—he, like others, thought of himself, asked for his own enfranchisement, and appeared most selfish, because by the accident of his position he had nobody above him about whom he need be solicitous. In the minds of all these classes, however, the desire for political power existed; but as against each class separately, they who already were possessed of power were too strong to be compelled, and too wily and selfish to be persuaded out of their peculiar privileges; nothing remained for the expectants but combination—and this need, and this need alone, made them regard the ranks below them, and bestow on their expectations and wishes any consideration;—and in the scramble which we are about to witness, the history of which we are about to relate, we shall perceive the one and the same idea or scheme in the mind of all, and that is, by the combined efforts of all demanding power to bring themselves and their class within the list of the privileged, and having attained this benefit, no matter by whose aid, for

themselves, to keep out all below them. Against those who monopolized the powers of the House of Commons, the wealthy merchants and manufacturers were powerless:—So soon as they became themselves landed proprietors, they felt and acted as landowners and not merchants—and as merchants they, though wealthy, had no means of frightening or persuading the majority in the House of Commons. In this difficulty they had recourse to the small traders—with them they made common cause, hoping by their numbers now to sway the councils of the country: they were deceived; their power was laughed at, and had they not eventually raised the immense majority of the people, what in the phraseology of the day were called the 'masses,' they might have fumed for a century, and won nothing from a contemptuous aristocracy. To the masses, then, they at length applied—and at the general election which had just occurred, declarations had been made, which throughout the country induced the labouring classes to take an active part in the struggle. As the struggle proceeded, the necessity for popular intervention was daily more evident. The aristocracy firmly resisted, and refused every concession; and at length yielded only when their great leader the Duke of Wellington gave them to understand that civil war or concession was their only alternative. This probability of war would not have been foreseen or felt, had not the people—that is, the millions of labourers throughout the country, become excited, and taken an active part in the struggle as it

proceeded. When they were fairly roused, the aristocracy retreated from their first determination of unconditional refusal. With that practical wisdom, which by an aristocracy has been so often shown, they determined to give up as little as possible, and by taking advantage of the ill-cemented union of their opponents, to separate one class from another, to concede what the richer asked, in order to be able to refuse the demands of the millions who had made the union formidable.

The excitement abroad, and the uneasiness and excitement which were beginning at home when the elections were about to take place, favoured in no slight degree the plans of the opposition; the Whigs consequently stepped forward, and placed themselves at the head of all classes of reformers. Had they been at that moment actually in office, or had they even hoped by the ordinary progress of events in parliament to attain to office, the popular enthusiasm respecting the French revolution, which under their fostering care extended over the majority of the people, sweeping before it ancient feelings, present fears, and those strong prepossessions of caste which so peculiarly distinguish every portion of English society, would not probably have found in them this ardent support, but have been met by a fierce and effective opposition. No great move has hitherto been made in England of a political character unless with the aid and under the guidance of some portion, and a large portion,

of the aristocracy. Whether in 1640, or 1688, or 1830, the popular chiefs belonged to this class, and by their countenance maintained, increased, and directed the popular enthusiasm or feeling which at each epoch they found already existing; but which had been brought about by circumstances to which they had but little if at all contributed. There was in 1830 among the people of all the industrious classes of the towns, great and increasing intelligence, joined to a feeling of discontent because of the anomalies in the nature of our political institutions, and of the many imperfections which existed in the administration of the national concerns; which imperfections were generally supposed to be caused by the incongruities and faulty construction of these institutions; against which, therefore, the popular discontent was directed; and these, together with the ministerial errors they permitted and protected, were supposed to have produced much, if not all, of that misery which the industrious classes had so long and so patiently suffered. For many years, unrestrained and very acute discussion had been industriously carried on, in all the various shapes and methods which a perfectly free press supplies, upon every subject which touched the common weal, whether politically, morally, or socially. During these years no European war had distracted the attention of our people, either by idle visions of a vain glory, or by the terrors and distress which a costly contest entails upon all, and more especially the poorer

classes of society. The ingenuity of an industrious, energetic, and highly intelligent nation had been during this long period steadily directed to the improvement of their physical and their mental condition. Wealth rapidly increasing, kept up and fostered this state of mental activity, created new wants, and by so doing enlarged the views, as well as sharpened the wits of the whole industrious population. In such a state of things political discussion was inevitable, a discussion which, as all classes took part in it, necessarily brought to view all the peculiarities of our institutions, and into dispute the reasons adduced by those who supported them. Unlimited discussion, in its very terms, means entertaining as well as discussing any and every opinion, either upon abstract questions, or subjects of immediate and practical application. Now though in England the great influence of its powerful aristocracy gives a sort of precedence and fashion to certain habits of thought and certain classes of opinion, still even here perfectly free discussion, by making nearly every man familiar with the political institutions of the country, gave rise to a variety of opinions respecting them. The anomalies to be found in every part of our constitution were assailed continually, and not without effect, by a large class of systematic and acute reasoners on the science of government, whose unsparing criticisms, and accurate and often profound deductions, were not always refuted by those who argued in support of things as they were, and who, by appeals to the beneficial

working of the system, sought to repel the hostile inferences of a severe and inexorable logic. The class of reasoners, called at this period Radical reformers, had produced a much more serious effect on public opinion than superficial inquirers perceived, or interested ones would acknowledge. The important practical effect was not made evident by converting and bringing over large numbers of political partisans from one banner or class to another, or by making them renounce one appellation and adopt another; but it was shown by affecting the conclusions of all classes, and inducing them, while they retained their old distinctive names, to reason after a new fashion, and according to principles wholly different from those to which they had been previously accustomed.

By imperceptible degrees, by the silent operation of continued inquiry, a great change had been wrought in public opinion during the fifteen years of peace. Knowledge advanced—the ends for which government is instituted became more clearly defined—the means by which these ends could be obtained, understood—and a rational, in place of a sentimental, estimation of political institutions and conduct, and their results, became common to all classes of the kingdom. The country gentleman—the educated men of the liberal professions—the fortunate merchant and trader—the manufacturer, whose wealth brought to himself and his family all the comforts and elegant luxuries of life—the acute mechanic, with

his well-trained mind and skilful hands—the mere operative, who, by congregating with the thousands of his fellows, had by collision his intellect sharpened and ideas enlarged—and, at last, the farmer in the country and his far-away labourer in the fields, all were subject in some measure to the influence of this universal discussion. Knowledge came to all, though in very different degrees; but with knowledge, a feeling of discontent, because of injustice. The various devices which, through favouring circumstances, had in the progress of years been invented and employed by the sinister interests of wealth to its own ends, were now understood;—stripped of the seemly cloak with which antiquity had covered them, they were exposed to public view only for public scorn; and those institutions which had for ages rested securely upon the foundations of an old-fashioned esteem, were suddenly found to be undermined and tottering to their fall. Herein was nothing violent; and the contrast between the situation of France and England, and of their respective modes of thought and feeling and action, was to the philosophic observer of the varying destinies of our race, a subject of curious and interesting speculation. Discontent existed in both countries—a spark falling upon this combustible mass might, in both countries, lead to an explosion; but the difference of the result is indeed a practical lesson for all those who, by accident or by predilection, become in any way concerned with the management and direction of those general

interests which constitute that which we call the commonwealth. In France, rulers and ruled have seldom been content to allow their differences to be settled by the gradual operation of law, and to permit the determinations of the majority to be manifested by means of peaceful and permanent forms. Force has been usually the means by which all parties in France have sought to give effect to their opinions. The government abrogates the law—the people rise in rebellion; a sanguinary conflict is the result—a dynasty is overthrown—another established—heroic courage—a clemency more heroic still, in fact virtue—that is, heroic virtue—in a thousand shapes is seen in the people; but there is one thing wanting, one thing of which the governors and the governed are alike incapable—and that is, obedience to the omnipotence of law—that almost superstitious regard for legality and the forms of law, which distinguished the Roman in ancient, as they distinguish the Englishman and American in modern times—and which, if once acquired by a people, will do more than anything to win for them the immeasurable good which a permanent and orderly government can alone confer.

The Whigs in 1830, on the dissolution of parliament, found the people in England discontented with the condition of the government, and roused to enthusiasm by the happy result of the great revolution in France. Taking advantage of this state of things, they at once assumed the office of leaders of the people, hoping to turn the popular feeling to their own party

benefit. They evidently knew little of the popular feelings which they sought to lead, and little suspected the strength of the current to which they were about to commit themselves. Not aware of the highly excitable condition of the people, they, when they began the contest of the elections, employed language most inflammatory and unguarded, supposing that it would fall on the dull ears of ordinary constituencies. They were startled by the response they received, and began very quickly to be alarmed by their own success.

Among the most popular topics, as they unexpectedly found, was that of reform in parliament. Political parties in England, and among them the Whigs, know generally very little of the popular opinions. Political men are accustomed to live in separate, exclusive and narrow coteries. They form a society for themselves; their own set is to them, the world; and the opinions of that set, they fancy the reigning opinions. Of the silent working of discussion during late years, the Whigs were profoundly ignorant, and fancied that the people out of doors were like the House of Commons. They knew well what the House of Commons felt and thought, and were aware of the means by which that audience could be affected—little dreaming that influences had been at work among the people, to whom they were now about to address themselves under very novel circumstances, to which the small world of that House, and their own peculiar social circles, had been but little, if at all, subject. To rouse any sudden or dangerous enthusiasm

in their own class, they knew was utterly impossible—was a danger against which it was unnecessary to take any precaution. But, unexpectedly, they found themselves among men who believed the words they heard were intended to represent things, and therefore assumed the protestations and fierce denunciations of Whig orators to be significant of what the simple meaning of the words indicated, and not mere empty phrases, employed by wordy rhetoricians.

Two of the elections were at the time considered important, because they were remarkable evidence of the lively enthusiasm then prevalent; these were those of Middlesex and of Yorkshire,—for the first of which Mr. Hume was returned without opposition; for the second Mr. Brougham, after a nominal contest. In ordinary times these great constituencies usually selected persons connected with, and proposed by, the great landed proprietors of the county, and who might therefore be deemed rather the representatives of certain great families, than of the so-called freeholders. A contest for a small county even, was in those days so fearfully expensive, that none but a rich man could pretend to present himself as a candidate; and what are called liberal opinions seldom found favour with great landed potentates. In the two cases here mentioned, however, neither of the candidates was connected with the landed proprietors of the counties for which they were chosen, nor had they themselves possessions which gave them personally any claim to, or influence

over, the suffrages of the freeholders. Mr. Hume was, moreover, not a Whig—not in any way a party man—nevertheless he was now put forward by the Whig party, as the most popular candidate whom they could select to fight the battle of reform in the great metropolitan county;[1] and although he had always professed opinions far more democratic than was agreeable to the Whigs, they now sought his aid, and did not hesitate to make common cause with this uncompromising radical reformer.

The election of Mr. Brougham was remarkable for reasons of another description. Though Mr. Brougham was, by his extraordinary power as a speaker, partially separated from, and exalted above, the body of the Whigs in parliament, still he was really a party man, and had hitherto been always returned to parliament by a great Whig borough-proprietor. From time to time, however, he pushed his opinions in advance of the party to which he

[1] There was, indeed, a reason, not avowed, for putting Mr. Hume forward for Middlesex, which, though a private one, still proves that Mr. Hume's opinions and conduct had found favour with the country. The electors of Westminster would certainly have chosen him. This gave Mr. Hobhouse an interest in the Middlesex election, as a means of preventing Mr. Hume from being his rival at Westminster. The Whigs had very lately made up their quarrel with Mr. Hobhouse, and now looked upon him as one of themselves. But Mr. Hobhouse was not of sufficient popularity to carry the county election. If he were removed from Westminster, the Whigs would lose a vote. They had thus another reason for persuading Mr. Hume to stand for the county.

belonged, and by so doing won for himself a popularity which his abilities, great as they were, would not have gained had he consented to be strictly, servilely, a mere Whig. The county of York, in those days undivided, returned four members, and from its enormous size, rendered the mere standing forward as a candidate a thing impossible, except at a cost which few persons were able, still fewer were willing, to encounter.[1] This ruinous expenditure, Mr. Brougham was not prepared for; but the enthusiasm of the people in his favour stood him in the place of money, and of county connexion. By the popular voice he was selected, and invited, and carried.[2] At one bound he reached the topmost height of parliamentary distinction. For his personal qualities alone he was chosen by the largest constituency of the realm, and for the first time in his life had the people for a patron.

One circumstance which was said to have contri-

---

[1] At the general election of 1826, Mr. John Marshall was returned without a contest; but as a contest was threatened, the preparations necessary for one had to be made. These, together with the expense of the nomination day (for the contest went no further), cost the enormous sum of above 17,000*l*. Lord Milton's expenses on a previous occasion were of an almost fabulous extent—rumour said above 70,000*l*.

[2] That his return for Yorkshire was unpalatable to the great landed potentates of Yorkshire is well known. Both Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Milton, personal friends of Mr. Brougham, the latter intimately so, frankly declared to Mr. Brougham himself their repugnance and discontent, calling him, in Yorkshire phrase, 'a foreigner.'

buted very materially to the defeat sustained in the result of the elections by the administration, deserves to be recorded; this was the Duke of Wellington's determination not to influence the various contests by any exercise of the powers of government. If such were really the fact, as was asserted at the time,[1] there can be no doubt but that the lukewarmness of the administration must have served very seriously to damp the ardour of their friends, and to turn all the corrupt interests against them. That such conduct was in accordance with the Duke of Wellington's general character is quite true, and redounds greatly to his honour—the more so, as at that time pretence of purity was not the fashion. The government was expected to use its great influence in favour of its friends; and when it abstained from so doing, it bewildered many, and angered most of those who had been accustomed either to yield obedience to the commands, to be guided by the advice, or to accept the money of the government, and give their votes as they were desired by those in authority.

But while the government was thus apathetic, the various parties opposed to it were particularly active. Wheresoever there was a popular election—one decided by a numerous constituency, not subject to any direct control—the liberal and ultra were usually

[1] I have also of late years, on the highest authority, heard the same assertion made, and made under circumstances which, if the assertion had been incorrect, must have brought denial.

successful against the ministerial candidates. The offended portion of the Tory borough-proprietors chose opponents of the administration. The whole of the Whig party were now hostile, as were those who were called Liberals, or Radicals. These, therefore, selected representatives hostile to the ministry, as did those called Mr. Canning's friends, who were indeed favourably inclined to the Duke of Wellington, in consequence of his conduct on the Catholic Emancipation Act, but who, from having been offensively ejected from power with their leader, Mr. Huskisson, had gone over to the Whigs and secretly allied themselves to that party. The ministry were now dependent entirely on that section of the Tory county members and borough-proprietors who still, in spite of catholic emancipation remained friendly, and also upon the members of such rotten boroughs as had been bought by their friends. The *Annual Register* gives the result of the English elections in the following words (the statement, though made by a hostile ultra-Tory writer, is nearly accurate):—

'The general result of the election was considered to have diminished by fifty, the number of votes on which ministers could depend, and the relation in which they now stand to the more popular part of the representation was stated to be as follows:—Of the eighty-two members returned by the forty counties of England, only twenty-eight were steady adherents of the ministry; forty-seven were avowed adherents of the Opposition, and seven of the neutral cast did not

lean much to government. Of the thirteen great popular cities and boroughs, with hundreds (London, Westminster, Aylesbury, &c.), returning twenty-eight members, only three seats were held by decidedly ministerial men; twenty-four by men of avowed opposition. There were sixty other places which might have contests, being more or less open, returning 126 members. Of these only forty-seven were ministerial—all the rest were avowed opposition men, save eight, whose leaning was rather more against the government than for it. Of the 236 men, then, returned by elections more or less popular in England, only seventy-nine were ministerial votes; 141 were in avowed opposition, and sixteen of a neutral cast. Ministers, therefore, could only look for a majority among the close boroughs, and the Scotch [and Irish?] members; and unfortunately for them, the great families who commanded the largest number of close boroughs were among their opponents.'[1]

The actual extent of the ministerial loss was, however, yet uncertain. As the elections proceeded, the stirring events abroad rapidly succeeding each other, aroused the constituencies and the people to an almost extravagant enthusiasm, and the hopes of the Opposition were of a far more sanguine character when the new parliament met in October, than in July, when the old one was dissolved. Still, all was uncertain; and all prudent men anxiously asked, will the Duke of

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 147.

Wellington yield to the strongly expressed public opinion—concede some reform—and thus preserve peace and his own power undisturbed—or will he sternly refuse all concession—put in jeopardy the existence of his own administration—and perhaps shake to its foundations the very constitution itself? We are now about to learn how this anxious questioning was answered.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE MEETING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT ON OCTOBER 26TH, 1830, TO THE DOWNFALL OF THE WELLINGTON ADMINISTRATION—AND THE FORMATION OF THE WHIG MINISTRY OF LORD GREY.

SUCH being the general political condition of Europe, such the disposition of the public mind in England, the new parliament met on the 26th of October. The House of Commons chose Mr. Manners Sutton for their Speaker;[1] and the members of the two Houses proceeded severally to take the oaths necessary on the commencement of a parliament. The requisite previous formalities being at length duly performed, the king in person, on the 2nd of November, opened the parliament by delivering a speech destined to be followed by very memorable results. It served as a signal for the explosion of all that party violence and hate which had for some months been acquiring strength by sympathy with the excitement prevalent throughout Europe, and which for the same period having had no legitimate mode of manifestation, was

[1] Mr. Manners Sutton had already for four successive parliaments presided in the Commons as Speaker. He had thus passed fourteen years in the discharge of the arduous duties of that high office, giving hitherto great satisfaction to all parties.

now become dangerously virulent because of its enforced silence. Through pamphlets, newspapers, and speeches at elections, public meetings and public dinners, its heat had been shown rather than let off. Any one conversant with English habits could easily perceive from the more than ordinary acrimony of the language employed on these occasions, the more than common excitement in the public mind at the time; and a stranger, who had listened to the vehement, nay furious language in which the various speakers sought to relieve their passion, would have been prone to believe that some violent outbreak must follow anger and indignation so loudly expressed.[1] But parliamentary debate is an immense safety-valve. The rush and the roar may be for the moment startling and somewhat trying to the nerves of listening statesmen, but real danger seldom exists. On the present occasion, however, the sound and the fury excited more than ordinary alarm, because of the agitation and change which the whole continent evinced. The fierce language of parliament was believed to be something more than an exhibition of mere party feeling—the

[1] I myself recollect having, in the year 1831, attended with a French friend a meeting in favour of parliamentary reform, held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern. So soon as the meeting ended, my friend eagerly asked me at what hour I expected the insurrection to commence, assuming that such warmth of language could lead legitimately to no other result; and was disappointed and annoyed to find that no violence was intended or expected. I must fairly confess, however, that these peaceful intentions did not *throughout* the reform contest satisfy active reformers.

response by the people out of doors was so loud, general, and sustained, that parliament seemed rather the echo than the voice itself of the people.

The speech delivered by the king was of unusual length as well as of great importance. It related, according to ordinary custom, to foreign and home affairs. In the sections which related to foreign affairs, it mentioned specifically France, the kingdom of the Netherlands, and Portugal—and by its language gave the opposition an opportunity of indulging in bitter and effective animadversion.

In speaking of home affairs, it called the attention of parliament to the question of the regency and the civil list. It gave up the hereditary revenues of the king, and asked in lieu thereof for a provision adequate to 'support the civil government, and the honour and dignity of the Crown.' His Majesty then adverted to the disturbances which prevailed throughout the country, and asserted that efforts had been industriously made to excite among the people a spirit of discontent and disaffection, and to disturb the concord which happily prevails between those parts of my dominions, the union of which is essential to their common strength and common happiness;"[1] and, therefore, expressed a determination to use vigorously the powers confided to him by the law for the sup-

[1] This was directed against Mr. O'Connell, and the agitation he had organized for the purpose of repealing the Union. Lord Grey, in the debate which followed, praised and agreed with this paragraph of the speech.

pression of all outrage and disorder. His Majesty then, in strong terms, expressed his confidence in the loyalty of his people, and closed his speech with a paragraph studiously worded after the mysterious and ambiguous fashion of these royal discourses; but by which the ministry evidently intended to signify that they had determined to resist every proposal for a reform in the Commons House of parliament.

Seldom has a king's speech been listened to with the breathless attention and anxiety with which this speech of William IV. was received by the crowded auditory which then filled every corner of the old House of Lords. Each paragraph as it was uttered was received as a declaration of war. The clear and distinct enunciation, the high shrill voice of the king, gave a disagreeable effect to the words as they fell on the ear of the many thoughtful men who listened to these important statements—for those words might be the signal of great and disastrous commotion. Triumph was on the countenance of the ministerial phalanx—and depression visible in the bearing of the opposition. They were ready, however, for the conflict, and were not slow to perceive that the dogged determination of the ministry to refuse all concession had given to those who were now considered the leaders of the people an immense advantage. Had the speech contained language of conciliation, and expressed some willingness to yield to the rational demands of the enlightened classes of the nation, the Whigs might have sighed away another quarter of a

century, in the vain hope of one day sharing the power and the profits of office.

What the speech had indicated rather than declared, the Duke of Wellington in a few hours after plainly, unequivocally stated. The speech which he that night delivered on the motion for the address, in answer to the king's speech, was the knell of his ministry and of the existing constitution. Every man, not blinded by party zeal, saw that reform or revolution was now inevitable—and all prudent men looked to the future with anxiety, if not with alarm.

In the Lords, an address, according to the common form an echo of the speech from the throne, was proposed by Lord Bute, seconded by Lord Monson. The debate which followed was uninteresting with the exception of two speeches, to which the position of the respective speakers gave extraordinary importance. The general purport of every discourse was, that the people, though disturbed and discontented, were essentially loyal and attached to the reigning sovereign and the institutions of the country. That the fires which were to be seen flaming every night in the villages, and the daily riots and assemblages of the peasants, were produced by the evil counsels of emissaries who noble lords asserted, were sent either from the manufacturing towns or from France, in order to lead the people into a violent resistance to the law, and to frighten the gentry into a compliance with their wishes. Marquis Camden said that 'the events which have occurred on the other side of the Channel

have sent forth evil-disposed persons all over the country.'[1] What these emissaries sought, who they were, from whence and by whom sent, nobody pretended to say or to know. The lords were very angry at the supposition that the fires were occasioned by the peasantry—vehemently asserting, without a shadow of proof, that political emissaries were travelling about the country counselling these atrocities. No such emissary was discovered in any of the subsequent trials, but many peasants were charged with the crime of arson, convicted, and punished. The denial of the lords, and members for counties in the House of Commons, was an idle attempt to shift the odium of these offences from the peasants among whom they lived to persons whom no one knew or saw. The Duke of Richmond, however, confessed the truth, when he said, 'My lords, I believe that a feeling does now exist among the labouring classes, that your lordships—that the upper classes of society—are to be considered rather as their foes than as their friends.'[2] This opinion he thought arose from the neglect with which the petitions of the people complaining of agricultural distress had been treated, and therefore entreated their lordships at once to inquire into and relieve the distress of which the petitioners had complained. The Duke of Richmond evidently desired to employ these outrages as a means

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, Sess. 2, p. 9.

[2] *Idem.* ibid.

of forwarding his own views respecting agricultural protection. While protesting against and denouncing these riots and incendiary fires, he was determined to attempt just what he was blaming—viz., to terrify the lords into concession to his own narrow schemes. The thin pretence of anger and of horror did not veil or disguise the real purpose of his allusions. He was thinking of, and seeking for high prices for corn while recommending the sufferings of the poor peasantry to the consideration of their lordships.

Each noble lord (all admitting in some degree the existence of distress, though not to the same extent,) described his own nostrum for its relief. The agricultural lords dwelt on the benefits of protection and the evils of the poor laws. The Irish peers insisted upon the oft-told tale—Government, they said, *must do something for Ireland.* Such is their ever-recurring assertion. The noble lords, like most of their countrymen, forget that nations and individuals must help themselves, and that a people or a man constantly soliciting others for aid must in the end become an object of contempt and scorn, and linger out a life of degradation and misery.

At length, on the one side rose Lord Grey, who now represented the powerful party of the opposition, to declare what would be their policy during the coming session; and on the other, the Duke of Wellington, to state the course which in the pressing exigency of the times the government had determined to adopt. The whole debate was, in fact, contained

in these two speeches, which might be considered party manifestoes; that of the Duke of Wellington proved to be among the most important ever uttered either by himself or by any preceding English minister.

The opposition were not prepared to move any amendment to the address, although they blamed almost every proposal of the speech to which it was an answer.

Lord Grey commenced with Ireland, and on this subject expressed his almost solitary concurrence with the principles and assertions of the speech, by praising and agreeing with the indignation which the speech expressed at the violent and seditious proceedings of those now agitating for a repeal of the union between Ireland and this country. There was, however, one declaration which was remembered in 1833, when Lord Grey was minister, and in the discharge of the duties of that responsible office, was obliged to maintain the peace in Ireland. When speaking of the attempt to disturb the peace of the country, he said, 'I cannot view without grief and indignation the efforts which are industriously made to excite amongst a great people a spirit of discontent and disaffection, which, if indulged, must lead to a separation of two parts of the kingdom, and will end in the weakness and destruction of both. For one, I shall be ready to aid his Majesty's government with every means by which the laws can be carried into execution for putting down such attempts; and here I must express

my gratification, that no new law is mentioned as being necessary. *The present excellent laws, if promptly and strictly enforced, are quite sufficient for the purpose, without the aid of any additional law.*' He then denied the truth of an assertion hazarded by Lord Farnham, who had said that the present discontent of Ireland was the result of passing the Act of Emancipation—' not to passing the act, but delaying it so long, we may now attribute the existing discontent. We did not grant it on the ground of right and justice, but through fear.' This alone was the evil attending that great measure of justice. 'Oh, would to God,' exclaimed the noble Earl, 'that the warning voice of those who are now no more had been attended to at that time (meaning of the union). What calamities would have been avoided—what evils would have been prevented! Ireland might now be in the enjoyment of profound peace and content, reaping herself the full advantage of her great local resources, and interchanging with this country the mutual benefits of their connexion. On the subject of Ireland I have nothing to object to in the address.' He then proceeded to observe upon the situation of the country, saying, however, nothing new, and simply echoing what had already been said by the speakers who had preceded him. From thence passing to the subject of economy, he merely expressed his hope that the promises given (promises similar always being given) would be kept. On the subject of the civil list, and the proposed intention of giving up the

hereditary revenues of the Crown, the noble lord indulged in approbation of the ministers, and eulogy of the king; he guarded his approbation, however, with these expressions—'I must here observe, from the manner in which the noble Marquis (Bute) stated the point, he seemed to imply that these revenues were to be considered as the exclusive property of his Majesty, and that the sovereign had a right to employ them as he pleased, without a reference to public utility. Against such a construction it is my duty to protest. These revenues were originally given to enable his Majesty to carry on the government of the country with dignity and effect; and parliament, in contributing to the expenses of the civil list, is bound only to grant so much as may supply the deficiency of those other sources of revenue.' The fact is, that this giving up of the hereditary revenues is a mischievous farce. The king of England has no hereditary property in the true meaning of the term; all belongs to the nation. Originally ours was a feudal government, and the lands which maintained the monarch and provided for his expenses were his own. When, however, this source of revenue failed and the government with the king at its head had regularly to be provided for by taxation, the landed property, so called, of the Crown, but belonging to the state, ought at once to have been sold, and the nation freed from the corrupt and mischievous jobbing that now always attends the administration of what is called Crown property. Lord Grey felt this truth, but did not openly express it.

The noble Earl then stated that he had touched on all the topics mentioned in the speech relating to our domestic condition, and thereupon proceeded to a discussion of our relations with foreign powers. The situation which Lord Grey occupied in a few days after the delivery of this speech induces the historian to scrutinize every word he then uttered, in order to test his after practice by his present precept, and we are not unwilling to recollect the following words, and to pronounce them on every fitting occasion to his friends and his followers. 'I do not look for defence to augmented establishments—to an increased army and navy; on the contrary, I am convinced that such precautions would bring upon us the very danger which we sought by their adoption to avoid. Were we to arm, as the noble lord has intimated we ought to do, and as he says all Europe is doing—if we were to adopt such a policy, I am sure that one little month would not elapse without our being involved in a war with France. But, says the noble lord, you see the hurricane approaching—the storm is gathering in the horizon. What, then, is to be done? Why, put your house in order—secure your roofs—bar your windows—make fast your doors—and then the storm may drive over you without injury. Admitted: but how is this to be effected? Is it by the mode proposed by the noble lord? No, it must be by securing the affections of the people—by removing their grievances—by affording redress—in short (I will venture to pronounce the word), it must be by REFORM.'

The party of which the noble Earl was at this moment the acknowledged head, have of late years been accustomed to assume for themselves the merit of having reformed the House of Commons—asserting that on this question of reform they had long based their whole political system—that to carry it they had directed all their efforts—and that on the success of their endeavours to this end their whole chance of political success depended. These, nevertheless, are ill-founded pretensions. In no part of their career as a party had they been earnest in their endeavours to reform the House of Commons, and when in 1782 they possessed a large majority in that House, they deliberately rejected even a motion to inquire into the matter. And although Lord Grey was consistent in being a reformer, he stood alone among his friends; and at this moment having lost nearly all hope, he spoke of it as a thing, indeed, that at some time must come to pass, but when he knew not, and, indeed, was not very solicitous to learn. He said, 'I certainly do not wish to agitate measures of this kind unnecessarily, or at an inopportune moment. I have been a friend to reform during my whole political life, because I have felt it to be a measure, which, if not resorted to, would one day lead to the destruction of the confidence of the people—perhaps to that of the constitution itself. 'I am convinced, therefore, that a measure of temperate reform must, sooner or later, be adopted by parliament, and I sincerely trust it may not be put off as

catholic emancipation was put off, until the country is threatened with internal strife and commotion. My belief is, that a desire to carry into effect some reform in the representation of the country, on the principle of making it efficacious, and at the same time relieving the fears of persons who imagine that reform must destroy the institutions of the country, would be attended with effects the most beneficial to the general interests of the community. So far from temperate reform being hazardous, I am of opinion it may be carried with safety; and I feel satisfied, that if judiciously pursued, it will give satisfaction and security to the country. * * * Whether or not we are to expect that ministers will undertake such measures I do not know, but of this I am satisfied, that if they do not make up their minds to adopt the course indicated *in time*, it will be ultimately forced on them, and reform will then be carried under circumstances much less safe and advantageous than those which now present themselves, since they will, then, be compelled to yield to expediency what they now refuse to yield upon principle. I have already told your lordships that I have been a reformer all my life; in my younger days with all the warmth—perhaps, I may add, with all the rashness of youth—I pressed the matter of reform further than I now might be disposed to do. But at the same time I must say, that I never urged the question of reform on the principle of abstract right, which it is so much the fashion to put forward—nor with a view to

universal suffrage, which in my opinion would not improve the condition of the representation of the country to such an extent as, I think, it might be improved.'[1] With one further remark as an argument against universal suffrage, the noble lord dismissed the important topic of reform! That which was to be the great means of his party and ministerial victory was, at this moment mentioned in this slight and almost slighting manner, quickly dismissed as one of the necessary but tiresome subjects, one of the common-places of opposition rhetoric, obliged to be used as a sort of decoration in an opposition speech, but about which no one was really solicitous, because no one believed it to be of import to party success.

The remainder of Lord Grey's observations related to foreign affairs. In speaking of France, and the revolution which had there so lately occurred, he used terms of unwonted and earnest eulogy. 'With respect to what has already passed in France, I certainly approve cordially and entirely of what has been done.' I rejoice as an Englishman deriving the benefits of a free constitution from the consequences of a similar measure. I rejoice, I say, in the success which attended the popular party in the struggle. In

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, Sess. 2, p. 13. Lord Grey was not aware of the change that had taken place in the philosophy, if I may so speak, of the radical reformers, whom he would have found as hostile to all theories based on *natural rights*, as he professed to be.

such a case resistance was necessary—was noble—and I cannot conceive a more heart-stirring scene than that of a brave people entering upon so holy a contest with courage worthy of the cause, and using victory, when attained, with such unparalleled moderation.' He then, having approved of the recognition by the ministers of the new government, expressed a hope that what they had happily begun, they would continue in the same spirit, and that consequently perfect harmony and good-will might continue between the two people.

The allusion in the speech to the affairs of the Low Countries, he stated, caused a great abatement of the satisfaction he felt in consequence of the recognition of the new government of France. The phrases of the king's speech to which Lord Grey alluded drew down severe animadversion on the ministry, and served materially in the skilful hands of the opposition to make the people believe that the Duke of Wellington was ready to drag the nation into a war in order to support the pretensions of the King of the Netherlands to the Belgic provinces, from which his troops had been expelled. The terms employed in the speech were certainly liable to this interpretation. They clearly evinced sorrow and displeasure at the conduct of the Belgians, and praised the character and conduct of the king. A war to support the King of the Netherlands was inevitably a war with France,—a war with France would have led to a general European contest; and

all the dreadful scenes of the late terrible struggle would have been renewed with misery and destruction even greater than before. Certain phrases employed by the Marquis of Bute seemed to assert that we were bound by the treaties of 1814 to interfere and to compel the re-union of Belgium and Holland. From this dangerous doctrine Lord Grey solemnly dissented, wisely asserting, that interference for such a purpose could only lead to evil. He, on the contrary, declared that he hoped Belgium might become an independent nation and be instantly recognised as such by our government. 'In every point of view, therefore,' said he, 'I must object to the expression in the king's speech to which I have alluded, as uncalled for, impolitic, and unjust.'

The proposal to recognise Dom Miguel as sovereign of Portugal was one on which he was not prepared to give an opinion. 'I do not wish here to speak of the private character of that prince, but I do not think the proposed recognition of his authority in Portugal consistent with a statesman-like view of our relations with that country.'

Of this speech we are to judge as the manifesto of a great party. That such it was intended to be, no one can doubt, who reads that delivered by Lord Althorp on the same night in the House of Commons. Both speakers touched on the same topics, expressed exactly the same opinions, and evidently acted in concert with each other; but they both so spoke as to prove that they had themselves no large scheme of

policy in their minds which could be proposed as a substitute for that which the Duke of Wellington might intend to pursue. Small and almost hesitating criticism was alone hazarded, and no intention was manifested by these two opposition leaders of playing on this occasion the great game of empire. Whatever might be their wishes, they clearly had no hope of immediately winning office, and evinced no intention of doing more than watching and finding fault in a small way with the conduct of the existing administration. The false move of the Duke of Wellington, when in answer to Lord Grey, he made his memorable declaration against all reform in parliament, played for the Whig party the game which they had not the courage or sagacity to play for themselves. The anger of the people out of doors, roused by the Duke's impolitic avowal, forced the Whigs onward, and the Duke retired, not before the parliamentary forces of the Whig opposition, but in deference to the overwhelming force of that public opinion which he had most unwisely roused and offended. To the small criticisms of Lord Grey upon the foreign policy of the government, as indicated by the speech, the answer of the Duke of Wellington was sufficient; and if Lord Grey's attack had been really all that could have been made, the Duke's reply would also have been satisfactory. The noble lord did not complain either of the language of the speech, or the policy of the government respecting France; he insinuated a doubt respecting its sincerity by expressing a hope

that it might continue as it had begun. The Duke's answer to this was—as we have begun, so shall we continue,—if we had intended hostility, we should not have commenced with recognition. The noble lord complained because the king expressed regret at the late revolt which had occurred in the Low Countries. The Duke replied, 'We expressed regret because we felt it—and being an ally of the King of the Netherlands, and believing him to be a wise and good sovereign, we acted with that due sense of right, no less than of generosity, which is due from one friendly sovereign to another—in a word, we stated what was strictly true.' * * * The noble lord says, can this government be looked upon as just mediators when it has pronounced sentence against one of the parties? Why, my lords, I am convinced the parties themselves will not attempt to deny the fact stated in the speech from the throne; they cannot deny it. They have revolted—and all we say in the speech is, that they have revolted.'

As respected the recognition of the government of Portugal, the Duke stated, that having failed to make peace among the family of Braganza, there was nothing for any ministry but to recognise, in order to act with the government in existence. The very principle of non-interference, he said, led fairly to this result.

Such was the Duke's plain answer to the not very formidable objections of his opponent as regarded the foreign policy of the government—his answer respect-

ing Ireland and her grievances was cogent, and may at this present time be read with advantage. Having justified his conduct in passing the Emancipation Act, he triumphantly asked, 'Will the noble Viscount (Farnham) venture to say that we do not now stand on better ground on the question of the repeal of the union than we should have done had not the catholic question been carried? I do not see the advantage therefore of repeating reproaches against me of having given way on that occasion from fear; I gave way because I conceived the interests of my country would be best answered by doing so; I gave way on grounds of policy and expediency, and upon those grounds I am ready at this moment to justify what I did.' He then added this pithy statement respecting the conduct of those who were ever whining about the miseries of Ireland:—

'The noble Viscount (Farnham) and the noble Duke (Leinster) have both of them complained of the poverty of Ireland. I can assure your lordships that there is not any man either here or there, who is more aware of its poverty, and the dangers to the empire from the state of the lower orders, than he who has now the honour of addressing you. But I would beg noble lords to observe, that it is not by coming here to talk of the poverty of that country that we can remove it. If noble lords will endeavour to tranquillize the country and persuade those who have the means to buy estates and settle there by holding out to them a picture of industry and tranquillity, with

its other advantages, they will soon find the country change its aspect, and complaints of the danger, arising from its poverty, will no longer be heard.'

Of the outrages in the rural districts of England, and the burnings which had supplied a theme for the greater part of the debate, the Duke at once declared that he had discovered nothing. 'What the immediate cause of these disturbances is, the government know no more than the magistrates and gentlemen of the country.'[1] He promised, however, to continue strictly to search after the guilty, and to punish them when convicted.

Had the Duke rested here, his government would have been safe, and the policy of his opponents would have been severely tried; but as he had resolved not to yield to any of the many demands now being made out of doors for some reform in the mode of choosing the House of Commons, he came boldly forward, and

[1] It was the fashion among the Tory, or, as they now began to call themselves, the Conservative party, to attribute these outrages to the designs of a political party, to consider them the results of their secret but direct suggestions. The *Quarterly Review* says, 'It is impossible not to connect the fires of Kent with those in Normandy; and although the origin of the latter has not yet been traced, inexplicable as it may still be, *thus much is certain*, that it is a part of some hellish complot against the existing institutions of society.—*Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1831. They were, in fact, and simply the outbreak of an angry, ignorant, and wretched peasantry. There was no plot: a neglected and benighted class of labourers thought themselves aggrieved, and thus showed their hatred and took their vengeance. There is nothing mysterious in the matter.

after his accustomed and honest habit of plain dealing, thus announced his determination. The words have become memorable in our history, and deserve to be accurately stated. They were evidently well weighed and deliberately uttered. Their meaning is plain, though the expression as it stands is hardly grammatically accurate. They are remarkable, not because the ideas they enunciate are new—the same things had been often stated before without exciting comment, or meeting with opposition; not because the assembly in which they were uttered dissented from them, or doubted of their truth; in the House of Lords, probably not half-a-dozen persons could have been found who would have hesitated a moment if asked to give them an immediate and most cordial assent; but they were uttered at a time when an enormous majority of the enlightened men of England had resolved to ask for a change in the constitution of the House of Commons—when their opinion of the faulty nature of our system of representation had passed from being a mere deduction of the reason into the condition of an intense and passionate feeling—a feeling that wrong was done to them—that injustice was suffered by them; against this injustice their minds, the minds of the enlightened men of the country, had rebelled—and they resolved to require of their rulers a change in the representation of the country as a concession simply to justice and common sense; their judgments were convinced, their feelings excited—and at this unlucky moment the Duke of Wellington thus ex-

pressed the settled conviction of his own mind, the fixed determination of his own stubborn will:—

'This brings me to the recommendation which the noble Earl (Grey) has made, not only to put down these disturbances, but to put this country in a state to meet and overcome the dangers which are likely to result from the late transactions in France—viz., the adoption of something in the nature of parliamentary reform. The noble Earl has stated that he is not prepared himself to come forward with any measure of the kind; and I will tell him, neither is the government—nay, I will go farther, and say, that I have not heard of any measure up to this moment which could in any way satisfy my mind, or by which the state of the representation could be improved, or placed on a footing more satisfactory to the people of this country than it now is. I will not now enter upon a discussion of this subject, as I dare say we shall have plenty of opportunity for so doing, but I will say that I am thoroughly convinced that England possesses at this moment a legislature which answers all the good purposes of a legislature, in a higher degree than any scheme of government whatever has been found to answer [them?] in any country in the world;—that it possesses the confidence of the country—that it deservedly possesses that confidence—and that its decisions have justly the greatest weight and influence with the people. Nay, my lords, I will go yet further, and say, that if at this moment I had to form a legislature for any country, particularly for

one like this, in the possession of great property of various descriptions, although perhaps I should not form one precisely such as we have, I would endeavour to produce something which would give the same results—viz., a representation of the people containing a large body of the property of the country, and in which the great landed proprietors have a preponderating influence.

'In conclusion, I beg to state, that not only is the government not prepared to bring forward any measure of this description, but that as far as I am concerned, whilst I have the honour to hold the situation I now do amongst his Majesty's councillors, I shall always feel it my duty to oppose any such measures when brought forward by others.'[1]

Whether the estimation thus expressed of the excellence of the English legislature be accurate or not, is one question; whether the expression of it at this time and in these terms, accompanied as it was by the declaration that the government would resist every attempt to change it, no matter how small and insignificant might be the proposed alteration—whether this was a wise and politic proceeding, is another and very different question. Experience will in some measure decide upon the first: time must and will test the value of the Reform Act, and teach us whether the expectations of the people were wholly fallacious and doomed to disappoint-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, Sess. 2, p. 18.

ment; but time has already answered the second question; and no one probably would be more ready than the Duke of Wellington himself to acknowledge that his declaration of that night was a great political mistake; that it was founded on a thorough misapprehension; that of the true state of public opinion he was utterly ignorant; and that therefore he underrated, fatally for his party underrated, the anger his statement would rouse, and the active, steady, universal hostility with which it would be met. Every man, however great his ability, commits some errors of generalship, and this was a capital blunder. Defeat followed as a necessary consequence.

The scene in the Commons on the same night was far more animated. No one incident was so important and startling as the closing announcement made by the Duke of Wellington in the Lords; but the variety, the general excitement, the skilful debating of Sir Robert Peel, the vigorous and eloquent sallies of Mr. Brougham, the eager curiosity of all to learn from the Commons of England the feelings of the people of England, the importance of the crisis, the danger and the turbulence abroad and at home—all these things made that a memorable night in the annals of our parliament. So soon as the House assembled, and before the Speaker read the speech which had been delivered from the throne, Mr. Brougham made the first and a significant move in the great game that was about to be played, by

announcing that he would that day fortnight submit to the House a proposition on the great question of parliamentary reform. Well skilled in all the forms of parliament, an admirable adept in all those arts which, by means of manner and expression, lend importance and give effect to every act performed, every word spoken in a deliberative assembly, Mr. Brougham seized upon the opportunity offered him by the proposal of some formal vote, to give, in a deliberate and solemn manner, notice of a motion upon which he knew, and the world knew, the fate of the ministry might ultimately depend. The tone of his voice, the settled gravity of his demeanour, when he rose on that memorable occasion, rivetted every eye upon him who was now the great popular chief. Having determined to give notice of his intention when there was a question before the House, he was enabled to accompany his notice with an explanation. This was his explanation: 'He had,' he said, 'by one party been described as intending to bring forward a very limited, and therefore useless and insignificant plan; by another he was said to be the friend of a radical, sweeping, and innovating, and, I may add, for I conscientiously believe it would prove so, a revolutionary reform.' Both these imputed schemes he disavowed. 'I stand on the ancient way of the constitution.' To explain at that moment what the details of this plan were to be, would have then been inconvenient —was indeed impossible; but, said Mr. Brougham,

'my object in bringing forward this question is not revolution, but restoration—to repair the constitution, not to pull it down.'

This notice was a master-stroke of policy. It chimed in exactly with the excited feelings of the people. Its disclaimers, and its apparent positive declarations, were alike directed to enlist on the side of the speaker the largest possible number of adherents. He spurned a sham reform; he was careful to guard against violent and dangerous change. He won to his proposition all the old affections, the love for the ancient forms and substance of our institutions, by declaring that he stood on the ancient ways of the constitution; while, by vaguely disclaiming the imputation of limited views, by declaring that he must have something large and effective, he gave a licence to the imaginations of those more ardent minds who hoped to attain some wide concessions to the popular party, and who desired to establish a regular symmetrical plan for electing throughout the empire the representatives of the people. Confining himself to wide generalities, he really committed himself to nothing. Whatsoever his actual scheme might have been, it would strictly have satisfied the terms of his statement, while it might have disappointed every expectation raised by that artful announcement.

The address was moved by Lord Grimstone in an insignificant speech; but the very insignificance of the person, and of his declarations, if they were

supposed merely his own, gave importance to every word he uttered. This assertion is only apparently paradoxical. A person of this description is supposed to utter words to express not his own but another man's ideas. These ideas, if conveyed in the skilful terms which the prompter on this occasion would have himself employed, might probably have excited no alarm, created no disgust. But, by the unskilful treatment of an unpractised speaker, the statement is blurted out, without preparation, unaccompanied by saving clauses or softening expressions. Set thus nakedly before the hearer, the real deformity of the thought appears, and arouses suspicion and hostility. Thus, when Lord Grimstone spoke of the French revolution 'as an event which in its results was a subject of grief to every individual'—when, passing on to Belgium, he described her people as '*tainted* with a like spirit to that which animated the French, and as having rebelled against a king ready to make every reasonable concession'—his hearers forgot Lord Grimstone, and thought of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. These then, they said, are really the opinions of the ministers—unconsciously betrayed by this unskilful and unwary supporter. They are hostile to the new government of France—they do lament the defeat of Charles X., and feel sympathy with the ministers who framed and signed his illegal *ordonnances*. In times of excitement, men are prone to suspicion:

a careful statesman guards against the danger, and employs not men with a name, but of intelligence.

The speech of Lord Althorp proved, that while the party. which he led had no plan to propose in opposition to that of the administration, they were prepared nevertheless to exclude that administration if possible from office, to seize upon the government and rule in its stead; although at the moment they had no hope of accomplishing their wish—no scheme for the attainment of it. He had little fault to find—his criticisms were even less pungent than those of Lord Grey; and although in a few closing sentences he lamented the total absence in the king's speech of any allusion to reform in parliament, and expressed in plain words that he considered the ministry unequal to the difficulties surrounding them, and that he was therefore ready to second any measure the tendency of which might be to displace them; yet was Sir Robert Peel so little moved by this very moderate reprehension—so little alarmed by the sort of opposition threatened, that he, when alluding to the noble lord, was profuse of compliments to the fair, temperate and candid speech of him whom he knew to be formally his chief opponent.

This lukewarm opposition, however, and frigid advocacy of popular wishes, were far from pleasing to those who were considered peculiarly to represent the opinions of large classes of the people. Mr. O'Connell representing Ireland—Mr. Hume speaking on behalf

of a very large body of reformers in England—Mr. Brougham, at that time, giving an eloquent voice to explain the wishes, wants and suffering of yet larger and more wealthy sections of the empire; these and many others, earnestly, indignantly attacked the speech and its defenders. Mr. Hume observed, with more of epigram than is his wont, 'I object to the speech,' he said, 'because, it appears to me, the people of England are left out of it'—'and with two sentences alone I can concur.'—'There are nine paragraphs in the king's speech on the subject of foreign politics, and one only respecting economy.' After dwelling at great length on the suffering condition of the people generally—on the many modes in which they were oppressed by bad government, he, like almost every other speaker who had any constituents except borough proprietors, declared that the only remedy for these evils—the only measure which would satisfy the people, was reform in parliament. All these declarations made by Mr. Hume were important, because it was evident that he spoke the opinions—that he represented the feelings of the great metropolitan county for which he was returned. His sincerity, earnestness, and honesty at all times won for him respect, and his cheerful good nature conciliated even violent opponents. But on the present occasion, his words were heard with an attention and respect which would not have been accorded to them, had he been still member for Montrose. His power hitherto was owing to his industry and perseverance and

honesty. The opinions he expressed were generally those entertained by men of good sense and ordinary education; but while he thus faithfully represented the right feeling and the common intelligence of the great body of his countrymen, his acquirements and abilities were not those by which power is gained in the House of Commons;—unskilful, wandering, diffuse in debate, he wearies, offends, seldom instructs, and never convinces the House. Sarcasm he knows not how to utter; but were he endowed with that dangerous faculty, his good nature is so great, that he would seldom, probably never, employ it; to eloquence he has no pretension, and although in his proposals and views of policy, there is much of real wisdom, and often great shrewdness and penetr his manner—his phraseology—his mode of arra his ideas, seriously detract from his power, and re impossible the attainment of any great personal influence in parliament. These defects on the present occasion, and for the occasion, were, however, overlooked. The great county of Middlesex spoke when he spoke—and the millions he represented gave weight to his speech. Sir Robert Peel well knew and appreciated the increased importance of Mr. Hume, and was not sorry to find this power confided to one who afforded to a dexterous debater so many points of attack. The sentiments expressed by Mr. Hume he felt were those entertained by a very large number of his countrymen; these sentiments on the present occasion might not have been skilfully expounded, still he

knew they were generally believed to be founded in truth, and he was therefore compelled to answer them. As regarded our foreign policy, all his efforts were directed to the one point of persuading the House and the people that no sympathy was felt by himself or his colleagues with the friends of despotism abroad, and that our government at no time had entertained the idea of interfering on their behalf. These assertions were probably at the time true, but he did not succeed in convincing the world out of doors of their accuracy, or of his own sincerity. The general belief was, that if the people would have suffered our ministry to follow out their own wishes, the French king, and the King of the Netherlands, and Dom Miguel would have found in England a willing, indeed, an ardent ally. Many were the circumstances which led to this suspicion—every word in the king's speech was susceptible of this interpretation; the language of the mover was that of severe reprehension with respect both to the French and the Belgian revolution; the appeal to the treaties of 1814-15 looked like recurring to times and principles all in favour of despotism—times when the Holy Alliance kept continental Europe in thrall—principles which made every attempt to establish a representative government an overt act of treason. In order to free himself and colleagues from these imputations, Sir Robert Peel, in terms the most explicit, repudiated the idea of any connexion having existed between the administration of Prince Polignac and that of the Duke of Wellington. He asserted that

the English ministry neither directly nor indirectly influenced the King of France in the selection of his administration. He indignantly repelled the charge of their having aided in framing or advising the illegal *ordonnances* which led to the overthrow of Charles X. and his dynasty. He then defended the mode of our interference in the affairs of Belgium, by insisting strenuously on the justice of the end sought, which was peace, and the means adopted, which were simply those of mediation and advice; mediation and advice which we were asked to afford, and which we did afford, in conjunction with the other powers of Europe, France included.

The proposed acknowledgment of the government *de facto* of Portugal was no less difficult to deal with as a matter of reasoning, while it was one of far greater hazard, in fact, because of the horror and indignation roused in the mind of the people generally by the detestable private character and actual atrocities of Dom Miguel himself. But Sir Robert Peel, using the same arguments which the Duke of Wellington employed in the Lords, stated that all attempts to arrange the family quarrels of the house of Braganza had failed—that English interests required that some mode of direct intercourse should exist between the governments of Portugal and England; that certain concessions which had been required by us had been made by Dom Miguel, and that the doctrine of non-interference compelled us to abstain from any forcible attempt to establish the legitimate queen. He did not, however, answer the

charge really brought against the conduct of the administration with respect to Dom Miguel. That prince had violated promises solemnly made to England—promises on the faith of which we had not only permitted him to enter Portugal, but had actually escorted him thither. By the aid of, and under the protection of our forces, he had treacherously and violently put down the liberal party—had executed many of their leaders—overturned the constitution he had sworn to defend—and excluded the queen to whom he had, with all the forms of religion, vowed obedience. Our protection, our name, our arms had enabled him to commit all these atrocities; and we, knowing what he was doing, permitted our troops to remain in his service, so long as the constitutional party had the power to check and control him. We remained until that party was destroyed, and shielded him from all harm, notwithstanding his open treachery and avowed intention to depart from his engagements. With these charges Sir Robert Peel did not grapple, but slid over them with the dexterous assumption conveyed by these phrases—'Without, in the slightest degree, departing from those opinions which we have expressed regarding the means by which Dom Miguel has become possessed of the sovereign authority of Portugal.'—'Two years and seven months have now elapsed, I think, since Dom Miguel assumed the government of Portugal, apparently with the acquiescence of his subjects.' He then gravely asks, 'seeing that English interests suffer by the present

uncertain state of affairs, consequent on the non-recognition of Dom Miguel, and after the apparent acquiescence of his subjects in his sovereignty for so long a period, whether we are now prepared to renew diplomatic relations, or whether we are never to renew them.' He seemed entirely to have forgotten, and hoped that his hearers had forgotten also, that Dom Miguel was an usurper forced upon the Portuguese by our means—and that the charge really brought against the administration of the Duke of Wellington, was that the power of England, while intrusted to his hands, had been used for such unjust and disgraceful purposes. This charge ought to have been met. The dexterity of Sir Robert Peel might for the moment enable him to give a false colour to the whole transaction, but the imputation remained. The people were not deluded, and the fallacy employed by the chief minister in the House of Commons increased in place of removing the honest indignation of a generous nation. They felt themselves degraded by the unworthy conduct of the administration, and were not likely to be cajoled out of their reason or their anger by the mere artifice of a very shallow sophism.

His answer to Mr. Hume's complaint of the conduct pursued by the government of Ireland was far more effective, and met with general acquiescence, because it deserved it. Mr. Hume had spoken of a proclamation issued by the lord-lieutenant against seditious meetings as a tyrannical attempt to silence Mr.

O'Connell—as a one-sided and partial measure—the Orange party being allowed to meet, to speak, and to act, while the great catholic party, with Mr. O'Connell at their head, were condemned to silence. Mr. O'Connell's attempts to obtain a repeal of the Union, Mr. Hume called the mere whim of one man, which government might safely have permitted to run its course, and which, if treated with contempt, would have been harmless—persecution alone, he said, gave it importance and strength. In this observation there was great force. But Mr. O'Connell's power in Ireland was so remarkable and formidable, that any government might be excused for looking at it with alarm, and employing extraordinary precautions to guard against the dangers that might result from an influence so illimitable. This influence extended, at that time, over every portion of the catholic population of Ireland, and was great also in England with all those who were called Radical reformers; but it extended yet further—the catholic aristocracy of England felt grateful towards Mr. O'Connell for the privileges obtained for them by his abilities and perseverance. In England Mr. O'Connell's power, however, could work no ill. Great as was his ability as an orator, over the sedate and well-governed mind of the English people his dominion was of little importance. He might convince their reason, but could never rob them of it. If, then, we were to judge of the necessity for issuing any proclamation in Ireland by the danger which would result in England from the

most perfect freedom of speech on the part of Mr. O'Connell or any one else, we should at once condemn such a measure as a most unnecessary and vexatious exercise of power. But Mr. O'Connell in Ireland could not be judged by rules applicable to England—in Ireland he was all powerful. Of the extent and nature of his dominion there, we may gain some conception from the language used respecting him in the House of Lords by Lord Shrewsbury. If one surrounded by all the thousand controlling influences to which Lord Shrewsbury was subject, could thus speak and feel, we may easily believe that the excitable people of Ireland, daily exposed to the fascinations of Mr. O'Connell's unequalled skill, without any counteracting circumstance to check their ardour and restrain or direct their enthusiasm—we may easily believe that they were wholly and blindly subject to his uncontrolled dominion. 'Much, my lords,' said Lord Shrewsbury, on the 8th of November, 'has been said of agitation, especially of that which has lately been attempted in the sister island. But reform, my lords, and all agitation will cease. Much obloquy has been cast upon a distinguished agitator and reformer of the other House; but however much he may be mistaken in the means or the end, I entertain a very different opinion of that individual from what I believe to be generally entertained by your lordships. However I may lament his intemperance—however I may grieve that a spirit of prudent wisdom does not always govern him in his public conduct, I certainly cannot partake

of that indignation which is so lavishly poured out upon him. I see in him our liberator from thraldom; he it was who under Providence (and without any disparagement to the vigorous assistance he received from others, be it spoken), he it was who crowned the cause of religious liberty with success—he terminated the strife—he appeased the storm of intestine war. My lords, when oppression was at its height, when irritation was most feverish, when the genius of discord was most busy to inflame the passions and to excite to universal anarchy and outrage, he it was that appeared like a leading spirit to restrain and to direct the tempest—he endowed the infuriated multitude with reason and with understanding—he waved his charm over the people, and all was tranquil. Yes, my lords, he guided the efforts of a whole nation, frantic under tyranny and misrule, into a constitutional means of obtaining their constitutional rights. But for him Ireland would have been lost to England; she would have been worse than lost—she would have been one scene of devastation and bloodshed. From that he rescued her, and he has rescued us.'[1] Sir Robert Peel's estimate of the power of Mr. O'Connell was nearly the same as that entertained by Lord

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, Sess. 2, p. 117. — These words were spoken on the debate which arose upon the king's visit to the City being put off. They are not quoted because they are wise or true words, but because they give a striking instance of Mr. O'Connell's power over the minds of the catholics even of England.

Shrewsbury—his opinion as to the wisdom and justice of the ends sought, and the means employed by the learned gentleman, was, however, of a very different character from that which Lord Shrewsbury held—Sir Robert Peel believed and openly asserted that Mr. O'Connell was no friend of peace, and that he had himself declared that Ireland was not ripe for revolt—was not yet ready to oppose force to force,—and Sir Robert then asked the House if, after such a statement, there could be any doubt as to the real intention of the learned member when he formed the association against which the proclamation was directed. 'He is not to suppose that we are to be gulled and deluded into the idea that the simple object of that assembly was to promote petitions to parliament. His object was to form a permanent association, meeting in Dublin, the object of which would be to organize the people of Ireland on this question (viz., of repeal), to form their minds on the subject, and to keep them in continual agitation, until the time should arrive when it would become dangerous to refuse the concession of their demands.' The object of the proclamation was to put down such an association formed for such a purpose. But while this measure of repression was adopted, the ministry acknowledged that the condition of Ireland demanded and should from them receive the most careful and anxious consideration.

That Mr. O'Connell's real intention was such as Sir Robert Peel imagined is very doubtful—that the

object of the association was what Mr. O'Connell asserted, was certainly untrue. He wished not simply to promote petitions, but also to continue agitation. But he entertained no hope, in fact no desire, to see a repeal of the Union. He liked agitation because by that he lived—he dreaded war, because he disliked danger—and was in truth a kind-hearted man. But repeal could not, he well knew, be attained without war; and still more sure was he, that, if without war repeal should be conceded by England, civil war would immediately break out in Ireland herself, which would cease only upon the extirpation of one or other of the contending parties. If powerful England were not there with her strong arm to enforce the peace, fire and slaughter and famine and pestilence would stalk over the land, and Ireland would, by her own sons, be made a spectacle for the scorn and horror and pity of the world. No man knew this better than Mr. O'Connell, and no man was more afraid of the chances of so terrible a result. The agitation, nevertheless, which he desired to maintain was eminently mischievous. It made the world believe that life and property were insecure in Ireland, and thereby rendered the amelioration of her people's condition impossible. The great mistake in the policy of each successive administration which had to deal to with Mr. O'Connell's influence in Ireland was the not relieving him from the pecuniary necessity which drove him to agitate. When the Emancipation Act was passed, his vocation was

clearly gone—a new theme for complaint was necessary in order that he might live. The ministry knew this, or they ought to have known it. At that time there was a fair opening for conciliation.[1] The true, the safe, as well as the generous policy was at that moment to have ascertained the amount of his debts and to have paid them;—for himself to have found a position of honour and competence, for which, by his knowledge as a lawyer, he would have proved competent. Had this course been adopted, Ireland would at this moment have been a peaceful and flourishing country.

The bitter observations made on his conduct by Sir Robert Peel, called up Mr. O'Connell in his own defence, before those whom he felt to be an adverse audience. The circumstances were precisely those best adapted to bring out into full action and magnificent display all the great powers of that most finished performer. At once he proudly separated himself from the House. He was there to repel calumny—but to beg no favour. He scornfully declared that he had more constituents than all his Majesty's ministers taken together; whom he taunted with having all of them slunk from populous places to take refuge in rotten boroughs. He then attacked the speech they had put into the mouth of the king, and bitterly complained of the total disregard they had evinced in

[1] See on this subject *Lord Cloncurry's Recollections.* From what he says, it seems clear that nothing but the ministerial blundering drove Mr. O'Connell again to agitate.

every part of that precious document, of the distress of the people both of England and Ireland. From point to point he hunted the ministry, through every paragraph; from all, drawing with great skill, and with no appearance of forcing or unfairness, the conclusion, that the ministers were in their hearts the friends of despotism wherever it might be found—whether evincing itself in the character of Dom Miguel of Portugal, Prince Polignac and Charles X. in France, King William in Belgium, the Turks in Greece, or the Orangemen in Ireland. He employed all his great powers to win the favour of the people of England; he placed their demands in the van of his array, and brought in the demands and complaints of his own country only as the necessary consequence of those principles which he had established and invoked on behalf of the English nation. To all this he compelled the House to listen with respectful attention—and with great skill, from an insulting cheer, drew an argument in favour of the opinion against which the cheer was directed. 'I am much obliged,' he exclaimed, 'by the sympathy that cheer implies: it shows that there is no necessity for a separation of the parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. I thank you; you have triumphed over my country, but you never will again. It is easy to triumph over the individual, and I wish you joy of it.' Of himself and his own power, and the mode in which he had employed it to maintain peace, he thus spoke,—

After having described the horrible destitution

existing in almost every part of Ireland, after having, as Mr. Brougham declared, exhibited 'in his speech a picture of Ireland which, if not magnified in its proportions, if not painted in exaggerated colours, presents to my mind one of the most dismal, melancholy, and alarming conditions of society ever heard of or recorded in any state of the civilized world:' he thus continued:—

'There is disaffection in Ireland—disaffection in consequence of the Union—disaffection to the government which has reduced the people to their present state. And let me tell the House, that you would have riots and disturbances in Ireland, but for the man who looks forward to the repeal of the Union, and who happily possesses so much of the confidence of the people as to be able to prevent them. Take away that influence, and what would be the result? You may send over a military secretary to put down the public spirit by a military force, but in vain.[1] Tell the people of Ireland that you have no sympathy with their sufferings—that their advocate is greeted with sneers and laughter—that he is an outlaw in the land—and that he is taunted with want of courage, because he is afraid of offending his God. Tell them this, and let them hear also in what language the Secretary of State, who issued the proclamation to prevent meetings in Ireland, has spoken of Polignac. If he be asked his reason for issuing that proclama-

[1] Sir Henry Hardinge was then Secretary for Ireland.

tion, he will answer, 'My will,' although at the same moment it would be easy to demonstrate its illegality. But I will not enter upon this discussion now, I cannot trust myself, my feelings overpower me.'[1]

He boldly denied that he had ever employed the language imputed to him by Sir R. Peel, and declared that a desire for a repeal of the Union was not with him a feeling of late years, but adopted at the commencement of his political life. His advocacy of that demand was his first political act. A powerful defence of his system of peaceful agitation, and a fierce defiance and denunciation of the existing administration, closed this remarkable speech.

Its effect upon the House was great, as well as unexpected. The Whigs at this moment viewed with complacency his attacks on the administration, and spoke in respectful terms even of his opinions and conduct respecting a repeal of the Union. He was wrong, they considered, but the subject was a legitimate topic of discussion, which he had as much right to raise, as they that of reform. Mr. Brougham spoke of the speech just delivered as 'a powerful address, in every respect worthy of his high character.'[2] Sir Edward Knatchbull, who still represented and headed the angry Tories, 'could not help adverting to the deep and uninterrupted attention with which the House listened to the speech of the honourable member

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, Sess. 2, 1830, p. 35.

[2] *Idem.* p. 36.

for Waterford (Mr. O'Connell), an attention almost unprecedented.'[1] Mr. Spring Rice, who at that period of his career was a professed and ardent Whig, even while challenging Mr. O'Connell to a sort of debating duel on the subject of the Union, always referred to him in the most courteous phrase which parliamentary language supplies. Mr. O'Connell, and that meant the whole liberal party in Ireland, and the Whigs were still warm friends. The time had not yet arrived when the latter party fancied they could attain their ends and retain their power without his assistance.

One circumstance of this debate, respecting Ireland, deserves especial notice, the more so, as it has no reference to mere party politics, which unfortunately have ever been the bane of Ireland. Every speaker connected with Ireland, Sir H. Parnell, Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald, Sir Henry Hardinge the Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Spring Rice, all dissented from Mr. O'Connell's opinion, which he took every opportunity of expressing—viz., that Ireland had gone on deteriorating since the Union—that her people of every class were sinking in the scale of comfort and wealth; and that distress and absolute famine were daily extending their cancerous circle over the land. Sir Henry Parnell, indeed, who was not in the habit of making hasty or ill-considered assertions, stated that the consumption of commodities in Ireland had increased greatly since the Union. 'In proof of this, I

[1] *Mirror of Parliament,* Sess. 2, 1830, p. 36.

need only refer,' he said, 'to the evidence given before the committee which sat during the last session of parliament, by which it appears *that Ireland has been a more improving country than any other that can be named.*'[1] This statement, made by an Irishman, is entitled to peculiar attention. Sir Henry Parnell was accustomed to the sort of investigation by which evidence is attained respecting the material or physical well-doing of a people. He was not an enthusiast, nor had he a peculiar system of any kind to support,[2] neither had he any interest in misleading parliament and the country at large. He, nevertheless, is one of the few instances of an Irishman speaking of his country and not indulging in unmanly whining respecting the misery of her people—not pestering his hearers with the offensive importunity of a professional mendicant.

Although Mr. O'Connell's speech had proved an effective attack on the administration, when looked upon

---

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 41.

[2] Lord Anglesey's estimate of Sir Henry Parnell as an authority hardly agrees with the assertion of the text:—

'I do not think Parnell's secession is a great loss (this was in 1832). He is a busy good man of business, but he is terribly *un homme à système*, and a too rigid parer of cheese and candle ends.' Lord Anglesey's authority is much lessened by the succeeding sentences. 'They are taking everything from poor Ireland. I fear *he* (Parnell) has suggested the withdrawing the king's plates. Every guinea taken from expenditure in this impoverished country is very pernicious economy.'—See *Lord Cloncurry's Recollections*, p. 438. When will statesmen learn that *spending* is not the way to benefit the poor—that is, the industrious poor?

merely as a parliamentary philippic, he had done nothing which really tended to weaken them in the House, or even to affect their permanent reputation out of doors. Up to this moment, with the exception of Mr. Brougham's notice, nothing had occurred in the House of Commons which could have excited alarm in the mind of the ministers. They had, on the contrary, reason to congratulate themselves. Lord Althorp, speaking for the Whigs, had openly declared, that though he had the wish to dispossess the administration, he had no plan for the attainment of that end, neither did he seem to suppose that anybody else had. Judging from this, Sir Robert Peel might reasonably have supposed that in the Whig camp there was no concerted plan of attack—that their warfare was still to be a species of guerilla skirmishing, by which, though annoyance might be given, no power could be won;—and such we believe was really the case. The opinions of the public out of doors had been, indeed, gradually assuming a definite shape. The public expectations now came to be concentrated on one subject—their demands confined to one measure—and that measure reform—but none of the Whig party, with the exception of Mr. Brougham—and he could now be hardly looked upon as a mere Whig—seemed at all prepared to lead, or to join the people, in this new movement in favour of an old measure. Lord Grey this very evening had distinctly stated that he had no plan to propose, so had said Lord Althorp; yet both of them must have been aware of Mr. Brougham's in-

tended notice;[1] Lord Althorp indeed had heard the notice given—Lord Grey, before he spoke, must have heard *of* it. Besides, in their daily intercourse—and between Lord Althorp and Mr. Brougham the intercourse was daily and intimate—the subject must have been discussed. That the Whig leaders looked on with apathy, that they expected no advantage to their party from the proposed endeavour and plan of Mr. Brougham, is evident. Now at the eleventh hour they held aloof. That they would give him only uncertain, unwilling aid, if he should proceed, every act of the party proved. That such was Mr. Brougham's belief, his speech this night as plainly showed. The world remarked his altered tone,[2] and he himself was evidently aware of the height of that great vantage ground to which he had attained. At this moment, and for some days, he was the great popular chief, and he was now to make his first essay as the foremost man of all his people. His active genius had enabled him to win this high

[1] In fact, the terms of that notice (and vague and general they were) had been settled at a large meeting of the Whigs, at Lord Althorp's chambers in the Albany.

[2] Sir Edward Knatchbull, while expressing his dissent from the sentiments of Mr. Brougham, said, 'That honourable gentleman, in the course of his speech this evening, has dealt out so much blame on all sides, and has cast such reflections on persons of all parties, *in a manner so different from that generally pursued by him, that I cannot help expressing my surprise.*' Mr. Brougham felt, and made others feel, that his position was changed.

position, whether he was equal to the more difficult task of retaining it, remained to be seen.

His chief purpose on the present occasion was to alarm the people, and thereby weaken, and, if possible, destroy the administration. He sought to create alarm, by fastening upon the government the imputation of wishing, and intending to interfere with the affairs of foreign nations, by which interference we should inevitably be dragged into a war, through the ignorance, imbecility, and utter inefficiency of the ministers themselves. There was hardly an expression of contempt and scornful depreciation left by him unemployed when speaking of the administration. He described them as 'the most feeble and incompetent to manage the government of any ministers into whose hands by a singular combination of events the government of this country ever fell.' While thus incompetent, he said, all their acts proved, and none more than the speech which they had put into the mouth of the sovereign, that they were rash, head-long, obstinate, cursed with a spirit of meddling, and yet without one particle of the ability necessary for the management of the dangerous affairs with which through their arrogant and over-weening incompetence they were so prone to interfere. As for the speech itself, in his own language he proceeded 'to treat it as the speech of the first minister of the crown, and to carp at it, cavil at it, and tear it, and rend it to tatters at his pleasure.' But while thus dealing with the king's ministers,

while thus unsparingly dissecting their speech, blaming their acts, and depreciating themselves, he was most careful to seize upon every opportunity offered him to give praise and pay personal compliments to the king. His paternal goodness, he asserted, had led his Majesty spontaneously to give up his hereditary revenue and other rights which former sovereigns had been most loth to part with. To him he declared the people were affectionately loyal —though they were unfortunately compelled to view with apprehension the principles and conduct of the ministers who conducted the affairs of the country.

Of domestic affairs, Mr. Brougham said little; nevertheless, while speaking in terms of very guarded though warm eulogy of Mr. O'Connell, he emphatically declared his hostility to all idea of a repeal of our union with Ireland.

'I will oppose that measure, although it be brought forward by an honourable and learned gentleman with whom I generally act—with whom I generally agree—whose exertions for his country I have frequently had occasion to notice with admiration—and it would be folly in me to deny it, whose services I prize, and which I should be the last man to forget, and which it would be most unjust in me not to praise. But though I esteem these services, I must designate as bad the measure which he now contemplates; and I feel compelled here to declare that I will oppose it.'[1]

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, Sess. 2, p. 39.

From thence he proceeded to draw an elaborate comparison between the situation of Belgium and Ireland, and to explain why he supported the separation of the first from Holland, and yet was resolved to maintain the union of the latter with England. Policy demanded of him this explanation. His enthusiastic eulogy of the French revolution of 1830 —his warm advocacy of the Belgian people—his fierce denunciations of the ministerial foreign policy —and his attempts to make the world believe that a second Holy Alliance under English auspices was about to be formed and hold its sittings in London; all these things, if not attended with careful explanations and guarding declarations, might have been employed to make the people deem him rash, enthusiastic, and led away by theoretic views and republican schemes. The middle classes upon whom his power chiefly rested are exceedingly wary, and opposed in politics to all rash experiments, and nothing therefore is so damaging to the reputation and power of a popular leader, as to be considered flighty, rash, unsteady, and prone to change. The Whigs also have since the French revolution of 1789 been fearfully alive to the danger of what they call levelling principles. It was necessary, therefore, for Mr. Brougham, if he sought to lead the middle classes or to derive support from the Whigs, carefully to separate himself from all those who were supposed favourable to republican institutions, as well as from those who sought to divide the empire. He therefore closed his exciting

speech by insisting on the necessity of maintaining inviolate the integrity of the empire, and by an earnest and even laboured description of the attachment felt by the English people to the monarchical and aristocratic institutions under which they live.

'I wish,' he said, 'for no revolution; and I speak I am sure the sentiments of the great bulk of the people, who love the institutions of their country, who love monarchy and love nobility, because with the rights and liberties of the people themselves, these are all knit up together; they have a strong attachment, I believe, to our form of government; and for my own part, I declare that I would infinitely rather, if all these must perish, perish with them, than survive to read on the ruins the memorable lesson of the instability of the best human institutions.'[1] To this speech, marked by great ability, and effective as it was likely to prove out of doors, no ministerial reply was given during the present debate, neither was the apathy of the speaker's own friends stirred by it. The only incident worthy of remark that afterwards occurred on that evening, was the renewed declaration of hostility to the administration by Sir Edward Knatchbull, who represented on this occasion the old high Tory party. Recurring to the amendment moved by himself to the address on the first day of the last session of parliament, which had been defeated by a combination of the Whigs with the friends of

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 40.

the administration, he remarked, that Mr. Hume even had not supported him. Mr. Hume eagerly answered to this observation, 'Let the honourable baronet try me now, and he will find that my opinions respecting the administration are quite changed. Last year I supported ministers under the mistaken idea that they intended to bring forward measures for the good of the country; but I should be happy now if the honourable baronet is so inclined to put the sincerity of my present professions to the proof.' These words were spoken by Mr. Hume after the amendment had been put and negatived without a division,[1] and with this open declaration of war against the administration by every section of the opposition, the proceedings of this important evening closed. What the morning was to bring no one in either House of parliament seemed to anticipate.

So soon as the country received the king's speech, and learned the declaration of the Duke of Wellington respecting reform, a storm of indignation arose in every part of the empire. The people rose almost as one man in violent opposition, and demanded in a tone startling alike to the ministry and the opposition the immediate dismissal of the Duke of Wellington and the government of which he was the head. For some months, as we have already

[1] Lord Blandford had proposed a long tirade early in the evening, in the shape of an amendment, which indeed Mr. O'Connell seconded, but to which no one paid the slightest attention. It was an idle piece of raving, unworthy of remark.

described, the popularity of the Duke had been rapidly declining. It declined rather because the world guessed what was intended, than because as yet anything had been said or done to countenance the opinion formed by the people of the Duke's real wishes and intentions. The manner in which, apparently without evidence, the popular rumour connected his name with that of Prince Polignac and Charles X. has been already stated. That the public expected, and were waiting for, some outward manifestation of the real intentions of the administration was evident, yet when it came, in the very sense and of the exact nature which they had looked for, they were surprised as well as indignant. Being prone to suspicion, the people interpreted every word of the speech unfavourably—what we now view with indifference, and can believe to have been well intended and even prudent, the people at that time at once assumed to be damning evidence of a settled determination to aid despotism in every part of Europe, and to attempt its establishment amongst ourselves.[1] From day to day, the

[1] Mr. Hobhouse, in the Commons, on the 5th of November, most accurately described the sudden and extraordinary burst of feeling occasioned by the first day's proceedings in parliament, when he said,—'I never recollect in my life so decided a change as that which has taken place in the feelings of what we may call the people, as far as we can judge of that portion of them with which we come into immediate contact, in the interval that has elapsed since his Majesty came down to parliament. Immediately it was known that the speech, instead of being of a pacific nature, such as might be expected from a monarch in the

storm increased;—its influence was manifest in the House of Commons immediately. On the evening of the 3rd, when the report on the address was brought up, and thus another opportunity was afforded for the expression of opinions respecting the address itself, a host of members, representing counties, towns, rotten boroughs even, rose to give voice to their surprise and indignation at the language held by the prime minister on the subject of reform. The storm grew so loud, that ministers were compelled to speak, and to endeavour in some way to ward off and shield themselves from this pitiless attack. The attempt, however, was vain. In vain did Sir George Murray use language wholly at variance with that of his chief. In vain did Sir Robert Peel endeavour to shelter himself under the authority of precedent. The quick and skilful debaters of the opposition took immediate advantage of Sir George Murray's language, using words of welcome to him, as to one holding the same views as themselves; thus forcing him either to explain away the meaning of those terms which he had employed, or to remain fixed in a disagreeable juxtaposition with respect to the head of the administration. When Sir Robert Peel recurred to the former night's debate, and replied to Mr. Brougham's assertions, he also gave the opposition an

---

situation of his present Majesty, was one which threatened the dreadful calamity of war, a universal alarm was spread. Every man who met his neighbour in the street was loud in his angry denunciations, and the feeling extended far and wide.'

advantage. Sneering insinuations of his being forced to speak at word of command—scornful expressions of pity for his painful and humiliating position—slighting and contemptuous remarks upon his enforced arguments, were flung out in order to destroy his authority and influence. Every mode, in short, which hostile ingenuity could suggest, was pressed into service. Every depreciating circumstance—every accidental difficulty—every possible imputation—all were collected together, and discharged in one fierce broadside against the unlucky secretary, in the hope and with the intention of making the world believe that he was a helpless puppet in the hands of a despotic and overbearing chief. To arguments coming from a source thus described, and in their belief truly described, the excited people would not listen. They assumed everything to be true which was said against Sir Robert and his colleagues, they closed their ears to all that was advanced by or for them. This hostility, however, was not confined to the liberal ranks. The Tories were quite as violent as the most sanguine and enthusiastic Radicals. The formidable nature of the popular excitement was not yet apparent to these still angry politicians. They saw in the present movement only a means of offending, wounding, and punishing their old friends whom they considered to have betrayed them, and as yet they entertained no fear of the consequences that might follow the indulging in a sweet revenge. Lord Winchelsea, who might in his own person be deemed

a complete representation of the whole high Tory party, felt on a sudden his bosom glow with an unwonted fervour in favour of reform, and could not, to use his own words, 'restrain his astonishment at the declaration of the noble Duke relative to that subject.'[1] He maintained that moderate reform ought to take place—such as that described by Lord Grey, with whom he professed cordially to agree. The excited orator soon gave the key to his conduct. Friendship to Lord Grey, and agreement with his proposals, simply meant an unreflecting hatred of the Duke of Wellington. 'I must be allowed to say,' exclaimed the angry lord, 'that I am convinced, if the assertion of the noble Duke, made on a former night relative to parliamentary reform, was framed with a view of conciliating and gaining the support of the noble and high-minded persons with whom he has been usually united, I can tell the noble Duke that he might as well attempt to take high heaven by storm. These are times of danger and peril—times in which we require to have efficient men at the head of the administration of the country. Now we see the consequence of having not long since given up a great question, not on the ground of justice or equity, but upon the ground of fear. So far from creating confidence, the yielding up of that question has excited a feeling of distrust in the minds of the people. They no longer rely on the government to afford them redress or to

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 81.

mitigate their sufferings; they know that ministers will grant nothing but upon compulsion. I am one of those who feel the necessity of having competent men at the head of the administration in the present situation of the country; and I feel bound to say that those who compose the higher branches of his Majesty's government at this moment, are not in my opinion worthy of the trust and confidence of the people in this hour of imminent peril."[1]

In this difficulty he looked to Lord Grey and the Duke of Richmond, and entreated the House of Lords immediately to address the Crown, respectfully declaring that they had no confidence in his Majesty's present advisers, and praying him to remove them from his counsels, in order that those deserving of the people's confidence might direct the affairs of the nation.

Of the peril that was really imminent, neither Lord Winchelsea nor the party to whose feelings he gave a voice, had any conception; they therefore continued in their hostile course, and assisted their old opponents into office. Then they awoke as from a temporary delirium—sought again the guidance and friendship of those whom they had driven from power —repenting too late—crying aloud for aid against an evil which they had rendered inevitable.

While such was the growing ferment in parliament and in the country, an incident occurred which, by

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 81.

making the ministry ridiculous, when they were already unpopular, contributed in no small degree to the defeat which they almost immediately suffered. Our kings, on their accession to the throne, have for the most part been accustomed to pay a visit of compliment to the city of London—and the present sovereign had, by the advice of his ministers, acceded to the request of the City authorities, who had according to custom besought his Majesty to honour the city feast with his presence. This feast was to occur on the 9th of November, which is the day on which the new lord mayor enters on his office. The lord mayor elect was an alderman of the name of Key, a person accustomed all his life to the operations of trade, and only suddenly and by an accident connected with the busy turbulence of politics. London, including in that term the whole vast metropolis, was, from various causes, at this moment in a state of great, very unusual, and general excitement. All the thieves, and vagabonds, and even many well meaning but ignorant weak-minded persons, had taken offence at the institution of a body of effective police, in place of the old and useless watchmen. These new policemen watched during the day as well as the night, and being a well organized, respectable and intelligent body of men, were formidable to the whole vagabond population who live by depredation. Just when the excitement was at the highest respecting this force, which some deemed and called an unconstitutional force, the opening of parlia-

ment occurred, and the minds of the people flamed up in violent indignation. Against the unpopular ministers very violent language was freely employed, and there was reason to believe that their appearance in the procession which was to take place on the 9th from the palace to the Guildhall in the city would have been made the pretext for a riot by the ruffians who hated the new police, and longed for confusion and the opportunity of indulging in plunder and devastation. The conflicts that had so lately occurred in Paris were still fresh in popular recollection; and the timid citizens of London were seriously alarmed at the chance of a riot on the day of rejoicing—when the streets would be crowded by a congregation of every class of people both of the town and country. Under these circumstances, there was nothing wonderful in the fact of the lord mayor's receiving many communications anonymous and acknowledged, on a subject which at the moment much occupied men's thoughts. Many of these letters were probably written with a sinister view—many from an idle spirit of mischief—many in good faith. They very generally it appeared took for granted not merely the possibility but the probability of a riot if the ministers attended the king—and we may assume, without being uncharitable, that politicians hostile to the administration would not have been sorry to see them forced to be absent from the procession and the banquet, by reason of their extraordinary unpopularity. The lord mayor elect, upon receiving this host of letters, all of

which portended confusion and riot, became alarmed also, and wrote to the Duke of Wellington, warning him of the danger, and dwelling upon the terrible consequences of a nocturnal riot in the crowded streets of an enormous city like London. The Duke could not fail to perceive that in this statement there was much of truth. Many disinterested, honest, and well judging persons at the time believed that a riot would certainly take place, and they vehemently exclaimed against the Duke of Wellington for having advised his Majesty to accept the invitation of the City. For this, however, the Duke really deserved no blame. The acceptance was customary, and nothing except the extraordinary events of the time, which he could not foresee when the visit was promised, made the proposed proceeding dangerous. The Duke, however, was no sooner aware of the probable danger than he determined to avoid the risk, by advising the king to put off his visit. The citizens, deceived in their expectations of a pageant, were loud in their abuse of the Duke. The timid multitude were alarmed, and believed that some terrible commotion was about to happen; Sir Robert Peel's letter announcing the determination of the king not to visit the City on the 9th, was no sooner posted on the Exchange than the whole of the City, that is, the men of business, were excited beyond all precedent. The people were to be seen with anxious faces running here and there inquiring what and where was the danger? Had some vast conspiracy been discovered?—was a revolu-

tion imminent?—were the scenes of Paris to be enacted in London? A thousand wild stories were in circulation—mischievous people for mischievous ends exerted all their ingenuity to create alarm, and threaten danger, in the hope that the prophecy might contribute to its own fulfilment. The funds fell at once three per cent.—the two Houses of parliament met in anxiety and almost alarm—and such was the impatience of the members to ascertain the cause of all this commotion, and to give vent to their excitement respecting it, that they did not wait for the appearance of the ministers, but at once expressed in unmeasured terms their reprehension and sorrow at the proceeding. The ministers, when questioned, stated simply the facts as they had occurred—and then the world was angry because the danger was far less than they had expected. They were indignant because they had been afraid without cause—and the opposition immediately did their utmost to turn the incident to profit. The circumstances gave them an advantage, and they were not at all too generous to employ it for their own benefit. Every step taken by the ministers in the affair was blamed—contradictory accusations, and condemnation, were hazarded without scruple. First, the ministers were blamed because they had advised the king to accept the invitation, and promise to attend the banquet. It was plain to every man of common sense—so the accusation ran—that a pageant of this description would bring people of every sort and class together, and crowd them into

the streets—a riot in such a state of things was almost inevitable. Then it was said, having promised, why disappoint the people? If you were afraid, addressing the ministers, the opposition said, you might have stayed away—the king himself is popular, and could with perfect safety have proceeded to the heart of his metropolis surrounded by his loyal and loving subjects —have thus gratified their wishes, and fulfilled his promise. The absence of his obnoxious ministers would have grieved no one, but would simply have insured the peace. But now, said they, you have given the whole world to understand that there was danger to his Majesty, while danger there was none— you have preposterously risked the peace of the metropolis, and by that the peace of the whole country— you have caused the funds to be suddenly depreciated, and by this means you have rendered whole families beggars.[1] Why have you done this? For a selfish end—your own unpopularity was so great, that you could not appear among the people without running the chance of being hooted, perhaps pelted—and in order to turn from yourselves the odium attendant on such a disaster, you have unjustly, most ungenerously, endeavoured to make the king share the ill-feeling which belonged to yourselves alone. Your duty was to have retired from the pageant—to have said to his Majesty—'You, sir, can go to the City amidst your

[1] Mr. Brougham distinctly asserted that such would be the effect of this fall in the funds. He went further, and seemed to say that the sum of the country's wealth was lessened in consequence!

affectionate people with perfect safety, and loud acclaim—we should mar the scene by our obnoxious presence, and shall, therefore, beg your Majesty's permission not to attend you on this occasion.' If such a course had been pursued nothing would have resulted except one more proof added to the number already existing, and quite sufficient for all practical purposes, of the extent and bitterness of the popular feeling against the present administration. As the conversation proceeded in the House its acrimony increased. Ministers at length said, if we be as you say, thus unpopular and unworthy of confidence, why not subject us and our conduct to the proper and constitutional test, by submitting a motion to this House for an address to the Crown, praying for our dismissal? Sir James Graham answered this challenge, by reiterating with many bitter taunts his opinion as to the unpopularity and unworthiness of the administration; and by declaring that the time for which the ministers appeared so anxious was not far distant. 'Upon this day se'nnight the sense of the Commons of England will be taken upon that which I consider the most vital and important of all questions—viz., whether it is expedient or not that the state of the representation of the people of the United Kingdom should be considered with a view to its amendment. In reference to that question, the Duke of Wellington has declared himself against all reform; and the right honourable baronet, following his example, has also declared himself unable to see his way, and incompetent at this

time to give an opinion on so important a subject. His Majesty's ministers therefore and the public have come to an issue upon this great question, whether it be expedient that the state of the representation shall be considered with a view to its alteration. This is the point upon which we have come to issue, and as far as I can see, it is the declaration which has been made by the Duke of Wellington on that point, and the sentiments which have been expressed by the right honourable baronet, that have in an incredibly short period of time effected the greatest possible change in the sentiments of the public with regard to the ministry.'[1]

This description of the popular feelings and the change which had taken place, was perfectly true—it was 'the fatal declaration' of the Duke of Wellington, as Sir James Graham subsequently termed it, that had brought this great and sudden change and produced this extreme excitement. But the change in the popular mind was not the only one that had occurred. The feelings of Sir James Graham himself and the party to which he then belonged, had greatly altered respecting the question of reform. That question had suddenly in their estimation become of vital importance; and they who only a few days before had listened with something very like indifference to the announcement made by Mr. Brougham, that in a fortnight he would invite the attention of the House of Commons to the subject of reform,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 131.

before a week had elapsed, determined to take issue with the ministry upon it. In this they only followed —they did not lead the public opinion. The popular opinion made the subject important, and the Whig party proceeded to take advantage of an excitement, which they had in no way contributed to raise, and to manifest emotions of solicitation and anxiety which only a week before they would not deign to simulate.

There were now three important questions before the House in which the public took great interest, upon all of which the administration were on the unpopular side. There was first the question of reform, upon which, as Sir James Graham declared, issue was joined between ministers and the people; next, there was the subject of Negro Slavery, in which Mr. Brougham, on the 3rd of November, had given notice, that he would upon the 25th inst. submit a proposition to the House, for a Committee to consider the best and speediest means for the total abolition of slavery; and lastly, there was the great question of Economy, of which the Civil List yet to be proposed was an important branch.

The subject of Parliamentary Reform was fixed for the 16th of November; on that day Mr. Brougham was pledged to submit a plan to the House for its consideration.[1] The plan Mr. Brougham intended to

[1] The *Quarterly Review* of April and July, 1831, speaks of this pledge, and says, 'Among other phenomena, the appearance in Yorkshire of Mr. Brougham in the (*to him*) novel character of a parliamentary reformer, was not the least portentous.'—Vol. xlv. p. 281.

propose was communicated formally to the Whig party on Saturday, the 13th, and was very generally known, and openly canvassed. There can be no doubt but that the ministers were perfectly aware of the extent, and indeed every particular of the proposed scheme, and were probably convinced that though Mr. Brougham might obtain a majority for his motion respecting the subject, he would not be able ultimately to carry the substantive measure as he proposed it, or persuade parliament to pass a bill in which such provisions were embodied. When we consider the great change which Mr. Brougham had in contemplation, this anticipation of the administration appeared certain to be realized.

The plan, then, as Mr. Brougham proposed it to his assembled friends, on Saturday, the 13th of November, was as follows:—

1. All COPYHOLDERS and LEASEHOLDERS were to have votes.

2. All HOUSEHOLDERS were also to have votes, regardless of the rent or value of the house.

3. The great towns, such as Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, and others, were to have members.

4. All the rotten boroughs were to be deprived each of half[1] of their present number of members, leaving at least one member to each.

[1] Sir Robert Peel, in July 20, 1831, when describing Mr. Brougham's plan of reform as explained by himself in Yorkshire, stated positively that disfranchisement of any kind formed no part of it. See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, Sess. 2, vol. i. p. 716.

5. All OUTVOTERS of *Towns* were to be disfranchised, but in *Counties* it was intended to permit them still to have votes.

6. FREEMEN to vote if *resident* in the borough for six months.

7. ELECTIONS were in all cases to be effected in ONE day.

8. A further point was in his mind, but not so formally propounded as the seven first mentioned, and this was, that the NUMBER of the House of Commons was to be restricted to 500.

As regarded Scotland and Ireland, the same principles were to be applied.

The relative numbers as regarded Scotland were to remain as at present. Ireland was to have 100, if the whole number were to be as now, 658; but if that were reduced to 500, then Ireland was to have 80 members.

The Universities were to remain as at present.[1]

By this scheme, the whole character of the House of Commons would have been changed. Whether the change would have been beneficial we need not now

---

[1] MS. of Lord Brougham. In a debate on April 14, 1831, the Lord Chancellor, speaking of his own plan, in answer to Lord Carnarvon, said of it, 'There is no such mighty difference between my project for reform and the plan matured by his Majesty's ministers; that plan went considerably further than that now under consideration. I certainly do not mean to say that it proposed to disfranchise all these boroughs, but this I will say, that with respect to the extension of the franchise to inhabitant householders, the Bill recently introduced falls far short of that plan.'—*Mirror of Parliament*, 1831, p. 1402.

inquire; certain it is, that by it a more democratic character would have been given to that branch in the legislature, and that predominance which a very small number of great landed proprietors had hitherto enjoyed would at once have ceased to exist. To this change, if it were to be peaceably effected, not only the House of Commons but the House of Lords must be consenting; and no one yet believed that an influence could be found sufficient to persuade the Lords to consent to so large a diminution of their power. The calculations of the ministers, then, need not surprise us—they were such as any prudent man would have made at that time; no one unless endowed with a spirit of prophecy could have foretold the remarkable events that were so soon to occur.

The ministers were resolved, however, and for obvious reasons, not to take the issue which the people and the party of the opposition offered them.[1]

---

[1] The Duke of Wellington, when speaking of the cause of his retirement, and endeavouring to show that reform had nothing to do with it, thus satisfactorily answered himself: 'I was defeated on the civil list; in short, the government was placed in a minority. Upon that, finding that I had the misfortune no longer to enjoy the confidence of the House of Commons, I thought proper to resign the situation I held in his Majesty's service. Upon that occasion parliamentary reform had no more to do, as far as I was concerned, with the resignation which I tendered to his Majesty on the day following the defeat on the civil list, than anything else in the world. I admit I resigned next morning, *because I did not wish to expose his Majesty and the country to the consequences that might result from the government going out on the success of the question of parliamentary*

If Mr. Brougham were successful in his proposed scheme, and obtained a majority in his favour, his chance of eventual success, though still small, would be increased. The public expectations would be greatly excited, and the disappointment to which it was supposed they were inevitably doomed would be more bitter, and might therefore lead to mischievous consequences. The ministers therefore determined to ascertain the strength of their combined opponents (for it was now clear that combined they would be) on the subject of the civil list. This question, moreover, was beset with difficulties for the opposition, which they at the present moment would be glad not to encounter. The Whigs, from the moment of the present king's accession, had manifested a very anxious solicitude as to his personal feelings—his dislikes and predilections. They were profuse of compliments—exceedingly fervent in their expressions of loyalty and attachment—showed themselves, in fact, very desirous of gaining his goodwill—very fearful of giving him offence. Kings, like other men, are peculiarly sus-

---

reform.'—Mirror of Parliament, 1831, p. 1206. And yet the Duke goes on to say, with a sort of blind pertinacity, 'but to say I resigned on account of parliamentary reform, is wrong.' Sir R. Peel, however, said, July 20, 1831, in the House of Commons, 'that though we retired on the civil list question, with regard to which we were in a minority, yet it is impossible to deny that the anticipation of the probable manifestation of opinion on the question of reform in this House, entered into the consideration of the government.'—See *Mirror of Parliament*, July 20, 1831.

ceptible on the subject of money; so that when the question of the civil list came to be discussed, the opposition would find themselves in a disagreeable dilemma. If they were liberal in their votes of money, and thus sought to win the favour of the sovereign and the court, they would most certainly give offence to the people, and weaken that popularity which at this moment made them formidable. If, however, they sought, by economy, to strengthen their power with the public, they would infallibly make enemies among those who surrounded and influenced the king, and probably displease the king himself. The mere discussion besides was dangerous. In the hurry and excitement of debate, expressions fall from unwary or unskilful speakers which by them may be quickly forgotten, but which rankle deeply in royal bosoms, and for a longer time than in those of less exalted persons. The less a man has to think of, and the more highly he is taught to think of himself, the more easily is he offended, and the more lasting is his anger, the more bitter his hate. To an opposition seeking office, the discussion of a civil list must always prove difficult and full of peril.

The ministry determined therefore to begin the contest upon the question of the civil list. Sir Henry Parnell had given notice that he would, when the government proposed to vote the civil list of the new sovereign, move for a select committee on the subject. Such a motion if carried would show that the administration no longer possessed the confidence of the House,

and would justify, nay, would render necessary a change in the government of the country. A victory on the other hand, and of this, the administration believed themselves assured, would shatter and distract the opposition, and render their after proceedings uncertain, and might probably dishearten, and thus sow dissensions amongst them. On the 15th of November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved that the House do resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House on the civil list, whereupon Sir H. Parnell made the motion of which he had given notice.

The debate which succeeded, though short, and maintained almost entirely by Sir H. Parnell on the part of the opposition, and by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the ministry, was nevertheless important. The party by whom the amendment was proposed had little expectation of being successful. They looked upon it as one of the common modes of opposition, and never thought that what they now propounded, as the opponents of an administration, they would be immediately expected to put in practice as their successors in office. The world however long remembered the statements and declarations then made by Sir H. Parnell in the name of the Whig party, and often recurred to them as tests of the sincerity and good faith of those who had employed these professions of economy as means of party warfare. Sir Henry Parnell complained of the complexity of the accounts and the largeness of the sum de-

manded by the administration for the civil list of the new king. That sum amounted to 970,000*l.*—for everything, which at that time was included in what was called the civil list. The Scotch and Irish civil lists were included under the head of the English civil list; and although a saving of 85,000*l.* was asserted by the government to have been made in the whole items of expense, Sir Henry declared himself unable to ascertain how such saving had been effected, or whether in fact it had been effected at all. The new reign, he said, afforded an admirable opportunity for thoroughly revising the heterogeneous expenditure provided for by the civil list; and that the disturbed state of the country showed the time had arrived at which a minute examination should be carried into every branch of expenditure: 'I trust,' said he, 'that the demands of the people of England to have their burdens diminished, will on this occasion be attended to, and that this House will not continue to give its sanction to that extravagant expenditure which has led this country into its present financial difficulties.'[1] His proposal was to appoint a committee, which should examine into and reduce if possible every item included under the term civil list. He followed step by step the expenditure as classed by the ministers, and commented on, and condemned the extravagance manifested under each head. The royal salaries he considered improperly regulated by the scale of 1820,

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, Sess. 2, p. 237.

when the civil list of the late king, George IV., had been settled, which scale, he asserted, was higher than any before known. The pensions of the English, Scotch, and Irish civil list, in his opinion, also required revision and instant curtailment; so did the salaries of our ministers at foreign courts, and the salaries charged on the superannuation fund. The English civil list had in some degree been the subject of inquiry, and from what had already been discovered, it was clear that a more searching investigation was needed; but the Irish civil list, and that of Scotland, had never been looked into. The hereditary revenues of Scotland especially was a subject which demanded light to be thrown on it, yet had those revenues been studiously withheld from any species of scrutiny. Three propositions on which Sir Henry strenuously insisted excited especial attention, and won for him assent to his general proposal to inquire. The first of these was, that the amount of all the items taken together was too large, and might be easily and beneficially reduced. The second, that the scale upon which the personal expenses of the monarch were regulated was, when originally adopted, extravagant, and now still more so, because of the fall in the price of all commodities, except money, the purchasing power of which had in other words greatly increased; and the last proposition was, that the items of expense jumbled together under the one head of civil list, ought to be carefully separated one from the other. He stated that some of these should be permanently

provided for, while others should be subjected to constant revision by being placed among the annual votes of parliament:—That the monarch's personal expenses, and all that was needed for his comfort and dignity, ought to be kept by themselves and not confounded with other subjects of expense of a nature entirely different, and in no way connected with the king, his feelings, or comfort, or with the dignity of the crown:—That the country ought not to be induced to suppose that a million was voted and provided for the king and the royal family, when in reality a sum not exceeding 400,000*l.* was destined to that purpose:—That for the sake of the king, as well as the people, a clear understanding should be come to on this subject, and to that end an accurate investigation was absolutely necessary. The whole subject, too, of what is called the hereditary revenue, required strict inquiry, in order that the real expenditure and income should be placed before parliament. Much confusion and misconception arose from the manner in which those revenues were spoken of and dealt with, and no real economy could be effected with respect to them while they were permitted to remain in the present unsatisfactory condition.

The concluding observation of Sir Henry Parnell deserves remark. 'In conclusion,' he said, 'I would beg to observe that the wish of those who support this motion is that his Majesty may continue to be the most popular, and the most deservedly popular, monarch that ever sat on the throne of these realms.'

For what purpose was such a statement hazarded? William the Fourth at this time had done nothing to earn such a character. He had indeed succeeded to a king who had for some years withdrawn himself from the public gaze, and who was generally supposed to live in his seclusion a dissolute and crapulous life. By the contrast, the present king appeared in a favourable light. But if Sir Henry Parnell meant what he said, when he asserted that William the Fourth was at that time the most deservedly popular king that England had ever seen, he must indeed have had a strange notion of what are the great duties and obligations devolving upon the sovereign of a powerful people. If indeed he did not mean what he said, then does he deserve grave rebuke, for having bestowed this fulsome praise upon a monarch whom he knew to be wholly unworthy of such panegyric. Waste of money is not the only culpable extravagance—praise thus bestowed often does more injury than money thrown away.

To the proposal of Sir Henry Parnell the government resolved to give a direct refusal, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied to his speech by uttering a string of denials and assertions without order or connexion. The feeling of the old high Tory party was shown by Mr. Bankes and Mr. Holme Sumner declaring themselves favourable to the amendment. The debate, however, seemed to excite no great interest, and a division was called and taken almost directly. None of the great speakers or leading mem-

bers took any part in the discussion; and suddenly, and to the surprise of all men, the administration found themselves in a minority on a question which put an end at once to their official existence.[1] The numbers were—

For the original motion . . .	204
For the amendment for a committee of inquiry	233
Majority	29

No sooner were the numbers declared, than Mr. Hobhouse, with more eagerness than good taste or good feeling, rose and said, 'Sir, may I ask the right honourable baronet (Sir Robert Peel) whether, after

[1] Rumour said, and we believe rumour in this instance was correct, that the Duke of Wellington was highly displeased by the negligence which allowed of this surprise. The result was anticipated by nobody; and the probability is, that if the defeat of the ministers had been considered probable, or even possible, many votes would have been differently given, and many obtained from persons not present at the division. Some were absent from carelessness, some from anger. Of the first class, most would have been recalled to their posts by the fear of defeat, and many of the second class also. Many a pouting supporter, who would show his displeasure by absence when no real danger threatened, would be among the first and most eager to vote when the existence of his party was at stake. The Duke's notion of discipline was sorely disturbed by the conduct of the subordinates on this occasion; while his confidence in the generalship of the leader in the House of Commons was also greatly shaken. In proof of the assertion that this result was not expected, Lord Sidmouth's evidence may be adduced: 'Last night's division was a surprise to the ministers and their opponents.'—*Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. iii. p. 428.

such an expression of the opinion of the House, it is the intention of ministers to retain their places, and to continue to carry on the business of the government? Sir, I shall take an opportunity of putting this question to an issue.' Mr. Brougham, seeing the blunder committed by this eager partisan,[1] gently suggested that, although natural, the question was premature; and turned it aside by himself asking Sir Henry Parnell whether it would not be better to postpone appointing the committee till the morrow. The House, however, decided upon appointing the committee at once, which was done. Some routine business then followed, and this remarkable sitting was closed, and the House adjourned at half-past ten. And thus ended the administration of the Duke of Wellington.

The scene which occurred upon the succeeding evening excited extraordinary interest and curiosity. All were anxious to hear the ministerial declarations. Whether the Duke of Wellington would under such circumstances resign, or whether he would try a second contest, no one except the members of the cabinet knew during the early part of the day; and as there is always something exciting and dramatic in the

[1] Mr. Hobhouse, on a subsequent occasion (March 3, 1831), made a most handsome apology for this somewhat indecorous haste. The manliness and generous feeling evinced by Mr. Hobhouse on this last occasion, completely atoned for any want of courtesy in the present instance.—See *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 634. (1831.)

transactions of parliament when the fate of an administration is about to be declared, the two Houses were crowded both by members and strangers. There was also another circumstance which, as affecting the coming ministry, was looked to with no common interest. The motion of Mr. Brougham for a reform in parliament stood for that evening, and he had openly and rather ostentatiously declared that he had no intention of postponing his measure; and, though aware before he entered the House that the ministry had resigned, and that Lord Grey had been sent for by the king and commanded to form an administration, he was apparently about to proceed and propound his plan. Up to the last moment the public was uncertain as to what course he would pursue. One of the sheriffs of London appeared at the bar of the House with a petition signed by the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the city of London, in favour of reform; and Mr. Alderman Wood, a great and known friend of Mr. Brougham, on moving that the petition be read, took occasion to give at some length the history of the petition, stating that the declaration lately made by the Duke of Wellington had compelled the corporation again to express their opinions on the subject, and to lay before the House the deliberate assertion of them again. These preliminaries induced many to suppose that Mr. Brougham still held to his previously expressed intentions.

Sir Robert Peel now formally stated to the House that the administration had resigned in consequence

of the last night's vote, and that he and his colleagues only held their offices till their successors should be appointed.

Lord Althorp, who acted as leader of the Whig party, thereupon rose to suggest to Mr. Brougham the propriety of postponing 'the serious and important debate' intended for that evening, to a more fitting opportunity. The answer given to this suggestion by Mr. Brougham excited attention and eager curiosity. Mr. Brougham knew before he entered the House that the Duke of Wellington's administration was at an end; he knew also that Lord Grey was commanded to form another; and although he had learned this late in the day, and was therefore himself in a state of suspense during the whole morning as to whether he should be called upon to make his motion, yet when he entered the House the cause of that suspense no longer existed, and he must have determined in his own mind not to proceed on that evening.[1] But of the future he was by no means certain. He felt, what indeed all the world felt, that he, and the peculiar position which he held, was, and must continue to be, a subject of great difficulty and anxiety to the Whig leaders and the Whig party.

[1] He was, indeed, wholly unprepared, was without notes or documents of any kind, and had abstained from going through the labour of preparation, because he had learned from one of the retiring ministry their determination to resign. He did not prepare for a speech, because he had determined not to make one.

He must also have felt, what all the world believed, that the wish of the Whig leaders was, if possible, to frame an administration without him, but that to do so was not easy, if it were possible; and that, consequently, the great and embarrassing question would be what post they should offer, and what post he could be induced to accept. Up to this moment no communication had been made to him, except that which informed him, that Lord Grey had been sent for by the king; and the answer which he gave to Lord Althorp must have made manifest to his noble friend, as doubtless was intended, that Mr. Brougham was not in a mood which made neglect of him and his pretensions politic or even safe. Mr. Brougham declared, that he was anxious at all times, out of his supreme respect to *the House*, to defer to its wishes and act upon its suggestion. The question of reform was, as his noble friend had said, the most important question ever submitted to parliament. Of this importance he was himself deeply sensible, as well as of the responsibility he incurred in undertaking to propose it for consideration, and of the difficulty in which he was now placed by the request of Lord Althorp, backed as that request was by the expressed wishes of others. 'I am anxious,' said the learned gentleman, 'of course, both from the respect which I owe to the House, and out of regard to the interest of the question itself (he said nothing as to his desire to meet his friend's wishes) to defer to the declared sense of the House, as well as to

the shape in which I shall bring forward the motion, as to the manner in which I shall bring it forward, and to the time at which I shall bring it forward. I throw myself therefore fully, freely, and respectfully upon the House. If the motion be put off, I own it will be contrary to my opinion and to my feelings. The House may be right, or it may be wrong; I may be right, or I may be wrong; but I think I am right.[1] I beg it therefore to be understood, that if I yield I do so in deference to the wishes of the House. *And, further, as no change that may take place in the administration can by any possibility affect me*, I beg it to be understood, that in putting off the motion, I will put it off till the 25th of this month, and no longer. I will then, and at no more distant day, bring forward the question of parliamentary reform, whatever may be the condition of circumstances and whosoever may be his Majesty's ministers.'[2]

Every word of this statement tended to prove that he who uttered it was jealous, suspicious, and in some degree actually displeased. The detractors from Mr. Brougham's fame impute to him a wish for office—as if such a wish were an unworthy desire—and they appeal to the above words in proof of their assertion,

[1] He does not state upon what he might be right or wrong, and appears to be what is vulgarly called beating about the bush. If he meant the House to believe that he, if permitted, intended to proceed with his motion, then the whole speech was an artifice; *as it is certain that he entered the House with the fixed determination not to proceed.*

[2] *Mirror of Parliament*, ibid. p. 273.

as to what they are pleased to call his lust for place. There is, however, nothing necessarily unworthy in a desire, an anxious desire for office and the power which office gives. That which is unworthy in such circumstances is, not the desiring office, but desiring it for unworthy and selfish ends, and the being ready to pursue those ends by unworthy means. That Mr. Brougham should desire office, and high office, was, in his position, natural and praiseworthy. His activity and ability had in no slight degree aided the Whig party; and by his own ability he had placed himself at the very head of the great popular feeling of his country. He had been most triumphantly elected to the representation of the most distinguished constituency of the country—he was, for all purposes of debate, the leader of the great opposition party in the House of Commons—he was at that moment, without doubt, an object of great regard and confidence to the whole popular party in the country; and every suggestion of prudence and of a high-minded and exalted ambition led him to declare himself the great popular chief, and at all hazards, and no matter at what sacrifice as regarded personal ambition or feelings of personal and party friendship, steadily to maintain that character. The really difficult question for him to determine at this moment was, whether he could maintain that character and yet hold office with the Whig party. The phrase employed by him this evening seemed to say that he had decided the question in the negative, and that he had resolved to forego all expectation of place. The world so construed these

expressions. When again, on the succeeding evening the learned gentleman reiterated the assertion that he had no connexion with the new administration, many persons believed, more firmly than before, that his resolution was fixed to be the great popular chief, and to separate himself from all mere party ties. But there were others who put a very different interpretation upon these eager professions of a disregard of office. They said that these voluntary denials were the offspring of a vehement desire for place, and a fear lest he should be passed over—that his motion was insisted on in order to make the incoming party feel his great power and their own utter inability to conduct the government without his friendly aid, which aid would not be given unless he was himself accepted as one of the great chiefs of the coming administration. The result seemed in some degree to justify this last description. The history, nevertheless, of the whole transaction, as related by those who were the chief actors in the scene which they described, accounts very differently for all that occurred. Lord Grey, up to the last hour of his life, remained in apparently friendly and cordial relations with Mr., afterwards Lord, Brougham; and their joint description of the circumstances under which Mr. Brougham consented to give up his great independent position and become, in fact, one of the leaders of the Whig government, places in a strong light the many difficulties of Mr. Brougham's position, and may probably induce posterity to judge of the course which he determined to pursue with more of favour and leniency

than the violent prejudices of party permit his co-temporaries to exhibit. Subsequent events, which severed the old party ties, have so mutually embittered the minds of all the chief actors in these memorable scenes, that an unprejudiced judgment from them respecting the conduct of those with whom they acted, we may look for in vain; and passion so distorts the memory as well as the judgment, that an accurate statement of facts seems as difficult of attainment as a just appreciation of the facts when related. At every step we are met with contradictions with respect to the events as they are said to have occurred. We need not wonder to find conclusions at variance with each other, when the premises on which they rest are thus unsettled.

One party — the one most favourable to Mr. Brougham — thus relates the history:—

Lord Grey, when commanded by the king to form an administration, obeyed the injunctions of his Majesty "with the belief, 1st, that without Mr. Brougham's co-operation he could not form an efficient government; and 2ndly, that there was no objection on the part of the king to Mr. Brougham's receiving some important office. Under this impression, the first list of the proposed administration and its friends submitted to the king contained the name of Mr. Brougham as Master of the Rolls.[1] To this arrangement, it is said,

[1] This programme must have contained some name as that of the proposed chancellor. The name by some *was said* to have been that of Sir J. Leach, as well as that of Lord

the king immediately and peremptorily objected. That the king should have so positively prohibited this arrangement certainly seems strange. That the king had no invincible objection to Mr. Brougham was made plain by the result. Why, then, should *he*, the king, have objected to his being Master of the Rolls? The office is certainly permanent; and he who holds it may sit, and often has sat, in the House of Commons: and Mr. Brougham, with such a permanent office, and a seat in the Commons, would have been truly formidable—but not as regarded the king. The king would have had no reason to fear him. The persons who, under such circumstances, would indeed have had good cause for alarm were his Whig friends, and from them would the objection most naturally come. But nevertheless the king himself, according to the statement of Lord Grey to the person most interested, did spontaneously and peremptorily object. An offer

---

Plunkett. The name of Lord Lyndhurst has also of late years been mentioned, but such a proposal can hardly be deemed possible. The changes of that noble lord have indeed been great and sudden, and his notions respecting political opinions are and always have been exceedingly lax and accommodating; but such an appointment, at such a time, would have created incurable doubt and suspicion in the public mind, and have destroyed the new ministry at the very outset. Sir John Leach would, it was thought, be willing to resign the office of Master of the Rolls, in order to make way for Mr. Brougham, if he received a peerage, and was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland —Lord Plunkett coming, according to this programme, to England as the English Lord Chancellor; by no means an improbable, and certainly not an unwise arrangement.

was in the meantime made to Mr. Brougham, through Lord Duncannon, with which the world became, in some manner not explained, acquainted, and on which most of the imputations which the opponents of Mr. Brougham so freely cast upon him entirely rested. Lord Duncannon was commissioned to inquire whether he would accept the office of Attorney-General. This offer was at once positively and (it is said) *calmly*[1] refused:—upon which Lord Grey declared that his hopes of being able to frame a cabinet were at an end, and waited on his Majesty for the purpose of communicating to him the failure of his negotiation, and the impossibility now of forming an administration. 'Why so?' was the king's inquiry. 'Why not make him Chancellor? Have you thought of that?' The answer was, 'No—your Majesty's objection to the one appointment seems to preclude the other.' 'Not at all, not at all,' was the king's reply. The reasons for the one appointment and against the other were said to have been then very clearly stated by his Majesty, and orders were given to offer Mr. Brougham the seals.

Up to this moment no other communication than the one above-described had been made to Mr.

[1] I own that I am sceptical as to this supposed *calmness* on the part of the learned gentleman. That he should feel hurt, if not insulted, by such an exclusion from the cabinet, would have been natural, and by no means deserving reproach; and that anger, under such circumstances, should find words and acts by which to manifest itself is nothing wonderful.

Brougham by or on behalf of Lord Grey;[1] and up to this moment, it was the intention of Mr. Brougham to retain his distinguished position in the Commons, untrammeled by office; and when from the marked lead he had taken in all the proceedings of the opposition men were naturally led to ask, and speculate upon what was to be his position in the new order of things, he quite as naturally attempted to satisfy the public curiosity respecting himself. He had done this in some degree on the 16th of November, when he consented to postpone his motion respecting reform; and again on the 17th, when Sir Matthew White Ridley proposed to postpone certain inquiries into election petitions, because of the absence of the ministers, Mr. Brougham took occasion to define the independent position he desired to hold, by saying, 'He (Sir M.

[1] Mr. Croker, when the writ for Knaresborough (Mr. Brougham was returned for Knaresborough as well as Yorkshire) was moved in the House of Commons, on the 23rd Nov., took occasion to comment on the conduct of Mr. Brougham. This proceeding on the part of Mr. Croker seemed rather to have been suggested by spite and envy, than by any real care for the public interest, or for the character of public men, though that flimsy pretence was used on the occasion to justify this ebullition of vulgar spleen. Speaking, however, of the volunteer declarations of Mr. Brougham, he asks, 'Were the assertions in question meant as a stimulant? Had the then honourable gentleman been neglected? or, what is worse, had he previously been offered some post that he did not think suitable to his high character and station in society?'—*Mirror of Parliament*, p. 327. This alludes to a story prevalent at the time, that the office of Attorney-General had been offered to, and *contemptuously refused* by Mr. Brougham.

Ridley) says that ministers will not be in their places, and that therefore we cannot proceed. But I here beg leave to differ from the honourable baronet. We can do many things in these days without the assistance of ministers; and with respect to election-petitions, we can do just as well without them as with them. I speak this with all due respect for the future administration, and with all due respect for the distinguished persons of whom it may be composed, and who will undoubtedly govern the country upon right principles. *I have nothing to do with them except in the respect I bear them, and as a member of this House. I state this for the information of those who may feel any interest in the matter.*"[1] Having thus attempted to satisfy the curiosity of those who felt an interest in the matter, and having again on Friday, the 19th of November, presented petitions, and spoken on them in the Commons, Mr. Brougham certainly surprised the world by suddenly, on the next Monday, November 22nd, appearing as Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords.

This sudden change in the determination of Mr. Brougham resulted chiefly from considerations of party. Had he thought solely of himself, he could not but be aware of the great personal loss which he sustained by his elevation to the peerage. If the statements, however, made by Lord Grey were correct; if the successful formation of the Whig administra-

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, ibid. p. 280.

tion depended upon Mr. Brougham's active co-operation; and if his refusal would have led to the reconstruction of the old Tory ministry, then indeed we need not be surprised to find that Mr. Brougham should shrink from incurring the lasting anger and active enmity of the whole Whig party by keeping aloof from them, and thereby preventing them, perhaps for another quarter of a century, tasting the sweets of office. For thus ran the argument of those Whig friends, who induced him to accept the offer of the seals. 'If you refuse, Lord Grey will finally declare to the king that he is unable to form a cabinet. The whole Whig party will ascribe this evil result to your selfishness. That very circumstance upon which you insist as your chief pride, and which gives you your present power and importance—viz., the representation of Yorkshire, will only belong to you for the present parliament. A contest at the next election will be inevitable, and your Whig friends will be either hostile or lukewarm. The enormous expense of a Yorkshire election is beyond the power of your purse, and you will have therefore to return, if you can find one, to some presentation borough or populous town. Your proposed measure, too, of reform will never be so likely to succeed as by the endeavours, and under the auspices of a government pledged to bring forward and support some large scheme of parliamentary reform. As the Chancellor of such a ministry, you will be called upon to render a service to the cause of reform which no other man

can render—and which you cannot render in any other character. We see, and we acknowledge, the personal sacrifice we ask you to make. We know that if you simply look to personal considerations; if you think only of your own influence apart from all considerations of the public good, you will remain in the House of Commons and wield the great power which your singular abilities confer upon you as a member of that House. But we appeal to higher motives, asking you to think less of yourself and more of your country, and to adopt that course which will give effect to the principles which during your whole political life you have endeavoured to advance.' This argument thus skilfully employed produced the effect desired, and Mr. Brougham passed almost directly from the bar of the House at which he had as counsel been engaged when this argument was used, to the woolsack, and took his seat as Lord Chancellor before the patent which created him a peer was made out.[1]

[1] The arguments as stated in the text were employed by two noble friends of Mr. Brougham, *on the morning of Friday, 19th November*, 1830. On the afternoon of Monday, 22nd of November, he presided in the Lords as Chancellor, though at the time not a peer. This by the carping enemies of the new Chancellor was called indecent haste; and Mr. Croker was, in consequence, on a sudden seized with a novel and violent fervour of patriotism and respect for constituencies. As Mr. Brougham was the only man of the new cabinet ennobled by his genius, all the crawling tribes endeavoured to assail him. See Appendix A.

On the evening of the 22nd, while Mr. Brougham was presiding as Lord Chancellor, Lord Grey made his first statement in the character of prime minister, and in general terms set forth the principles upon which his government would be conducted. Prominently, and directly in the foreground, the noble lord placed the question of reform in parliament. He had, he said, while out of office, declared that the great question of reform could be satisfactorily introduced by the government alone, and that the government ought immediately to propound some measure respecting it. What out of office he had professed, he was about, now that he was in office, to perform; and he promised that a proposal for the reform of our representative system should be introduced immediately for the consideration of parliament; a proposal not of any wild or unreasoning change—not of universal suffrage—not a mere theory of pretended accuracy and efficiency. He desired to stand as much as possible on the fixed and settled institutions of the country. What he sought was to do all that was necessary to secure to the people a due influence in the great council of the nation, and of restoring by that means confidence and satisfaction in the determinations of parliament. Anything short of this would, he said, be insufficient; but while seeking for this end, he was anxious not to disturb by violent changes the established principles and practice of the constitution. And he then announced to the Lords, that to such

a measure he had secured his Majesty's gracious assent.

Besides this great subject of reform, Lord Grey also promised to consider immediately the important matter of the poor, and the laws which regulate the provision which the state provides for them.

He then most earnestly declared that he and his colleagues would direct their serious attention to economy in every department of the state; and every saving that could be safely adopted, would be made with the most 'unflinching severity.'[1]

While such were his principles and promises respecting our home or domestic concerns, of those which regarded our neighbours, he assured their lordships that peace and amity with all the world, and more especially with France, would be the object of his most ardent desire. To maintain peace by all means consistent with the honour of the country, and, therefore, as far as possible to preserve a system of non-interference, would be the first object and first duty of himself and his colleagues. The words of the noble lord respecting our relations with France excited universal interest, and earned universal admiration.

'But between governments like those of France and England, standing on the same principles of public liberty, and influenced by that great interest, there will be, I trust, a similarity of sentiment and feeling, and a sincere desire to maintain the peace of Europe, by

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, Sess. 2, p. 310, *et seq.*

a conduct totally exempt from all views of aggrandisement and ambition, and to secure that good understanding and confidence which ought to prevail between two great and enlightened nations.'[1]

He summed up his statements by this general declaration—

'To sum up all in a few words,—the principles on which I now stand, and upon which the administration is prepared to act are, the amelioration of existing abuses, the promotion of the most rigid economy in every branch of the public expenditure, and, lastly, every endeavour that can be made by government to preserve peace, consistent with the honour and character of the country. Upon these principles I have undertaken an office to which I have neither the affectation nor presumption to state that I am equal. I have arrived at a period of life when retirement is more to be desired than active employment; and I can assure your lordships, that I should not have emerged from it, had I not found—may I be permitted to say thus much without incurring the charge of vanity or arrogance?—had I not found myself, owing to accidental circumstances, certainly not to any merit of my own, placed in a situation in which if I had declined the task I had every reason to believe that any attempt to form a new government on principles which I could support would have been unsuccessful. Urged by these considerations, being at the same time

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 314.

aware of my own inability, but acting in accordance with my sense of public duty, I have undertaken the government of the country at the present momentous crisis.'[1]

This declaration on the part of the new premier excited very general interest throughout the country, and rendered him and his colleagues for the time exceedingly popular. Some of these colleagues were known to the public as having generally expressed liberal opinions of the Whig school. The plain promises of their chief were believed, and the public expectation was high in consequence.

Lord Grey himself had been in early life, and during the terrible tragedy of the French revolution, an avowed reformer. His declarations of principles in those days went somewhat further than the leading Whigs chose to follow. There was, however, in Lord Grey's manner at every period of his life a certain stateliness, which induced both his friends and his opponents to class him as a very aristocratic liberal. There was nothing in his mental or moral character which fitted him for the career of a demagogue—and all his efforts in support of an extension of the suffrage, though sometimes in argument supported and enforced

[1] *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 314: see also p. 471. Lord Grey in a speech on Lord Wynford's motion, for a committee to inquire into the causes of the general distress, stated in general terms his opinion as to the influence of past governments on the happiness of the people, blaming the war with France, and the taxation which necessarily resulted from it.

by wide generalities respecting popular rights, never made him a favourite with the people. Later in life, when he became a peer, his fervour on the question of reform was very much diminished, and his attention, like that of all other men of those days, was directed to the great struggle maintained with Napoleon. Lord Grey was inclined to peace so long as it was possible—and never failed to give expression to his peaceful desires upon all fitting occasions. When at length peace came, and Napoleon was subdued, he again from time to time expressed his opinion as to the necessity of a reform in parliament. This opinion was stated with a certain grave earnestness which made men believe it to be that really entertained by the noble lord. There was, however, nothing beyond the decorous gravity which always attended him, which induced the world to put faith in these professions. He spoke without passion, and never evinced much sympathy with the people. In this he greatly differed from his more celebrated and far more gifted colleague, Lord Chancellor Brougham, who, if he could have acquired the even, equable manner of the premier, would probably have retained that public confidence and admiration which his ardour and his genius had excited. The remaining members of Lord Grey's cabinet, with the exception of Sir James Graham and Lord Palmerston, were persons of very narrow ability —of small reputation for talent—and without influence with the people either on the ground of capacity or on that of earnest popular leanings. The aristocratic

character of this liberal administration also excited remark; and men observed that there were only two members of the cabinet who were not either peers or the sons of peers.[1] The list was as follows:—

Lord GREY	First Lord of the Treasury, and Premier.
Lord BROUGHAM	Lord Chancellor.[2]
Lord ALTHORP	Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the House of Commons.
Marquis of LANSDOWNE	President of the Council.
Lord DURHAM[3]	Lord Privy Seal.
Lord MELBOURNE	Secretary of State, Home Department.
Lord PALMERSTON	Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs.
Lord GODERICH	Secretary of State, Colonies.
Sir JAMES GRAHAM	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Mr. CHARLES GRANT	President of the Board of Control.
Duke of RICHMOND	Postmaster-General.
Lord HOLLAND	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Lord CARLISLE	Without office.

Besides these members of the cabinet, there were other persons in office, who enjoyed an influence very little, if at all, inferior to that of some of the cabinet ministers themselves. The most important of these

---

[1] 'Lord Grey's cabinet consisted of fifteen members—*thirteen* peers or sons of peers, *one* baronet, and *one untitled commoner*.' —*Quarterly Review*, vol. liii. p. 270.

[2] See Appendix A.

[3] See *Mirror of Parliament*, 1830, p. 543. Lord Grey is there reported to have defended himself from the charge of nepotism, and to have alluded both to Lord Durham's and Lord Howick's appointments, and to have justified them.

were Lord John Russell, who was then Paymaster of the Forces, and Mr. Stanley, Chief Secretary for Ireland. The following also formed part of the administration:—

Lord AUCKLAND	President of the Board of Trade, and Master of the Mint.
Mr. CHARLES W. W. WYNN	Secretary at War.
Sir JAMES KEMPT	Master-General of the Ordnance.
Duke of DEVONSHIRE	Lord Chamberlain.
Marquis WELLESLEY	Lord Steward.
Lord ALBEMARLE	Master of the Horse.
Marquis of WINCHESTER...	Groom of the Stole.
Mr. AGAR ELLIS	First Commissioner of Land Revenue.
Mr. C. P. THOMSON.....	Treasurer of the Navy, Vice-President of the Board of Trade.
Sir THOMAS DENMAN	Attorney-General.
Sir W. HORNE	Solicitor-General.

In Ireland.

Marquis of ANGLESEY	Lord Lieutenant.
Lord PLUNKETT[1].....	Lord Chancellor.
Lt.-Gen. Sir JOHN BYNG,	Commander of the Forces.
Mr. STANLEY[2].....	Chief Secretary.
Mr. PENNEFATHER	Attorney-General.
Mr. CRAMPTON	Solicitor-General.

[1] Sir A. Hart was Chancellor of Ireland under the preceding administration, and an attempt was made to keep him in his office, on the plea that it was judicial, and ought not to be dealt with as if it were a political office.—See Lord Brougham's (C.) speech in *Mirror of Parliament*, p. 445. See also pp. 493 497, 542, 713, *et seq.*

[2] Mr. Stanley had hitherto sat for Preston, but was on this occasion, when presenting himself, after taking office, to his old constituents, rejected by them; Mr. Henry Hunt, who was known by the absurd nickname of Orator Hunt, being chosen in his stead.

In Scotland.

Mr. JEFFREY ..... Lord Advocate.
Mr. COCKBURN..... Solicitor-General.

Some of the above appointments excited surprise. Lord Melbourne, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Charles Grant, and Lord Goderich were all old friends of Mr. Canning, and had formed a part of that administration against which Lord Grey had declared open war, and to which while it existed he always manifested very bitter hostility. A few years had sufficed materially to change and obliterate old party distinctions, and the times that were approaching were destined still more completely to disorganize the whole old political world. These four persons, indeed, and also the Duke of Richmond, who had belonged to the old Tory party, appeared not to have formed for themselves any very rigid rule for their political conduct. Mr. Canning had during his whole life been a vehement opponent of every attempt to alter the existing method of electing the House of Commons,[1] and never were there more cordial supporters than he found when propounding his views against all reform, in these very men, who now, without any explanation or pretence at explanation, joined his most marked and most bitter opponent, and formed part of a cabinet

[1] Lord Brougham says, 'It is difficult to overrate the effects of this resistance in obstructing parliamentary reform. Mr. Canning and Lord Dudley especially, the men of greatest talent in the party, were truly formidable antagonists.'—*Lord Brougham's Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 545.

pledged to bring forward immediately some large plan of parliamentary reform, and whose whole influence depended upon the extent of that reform, and the favour it might win from the people of the country.[1] The public at the time were so intent upon the object to be obtained, that they were not inclined to scrutinize very severely the conduct of the inferior people who swelled the ranks and fought under the banners of reform. The proceeding escaped animadversion in the general excitement. The men, besides, were useful; and reformers, like other men, are but too apt to wink at, if they do not forgive or forget, a profligacy which promotes their long-cherished wishes.

The victory over the late ministry thus unexpectedly gained, being the result of a combination of political parties, the new premier was naturally led to consider whether these allies could be made available in the construction of his own administration. Among them he could not fail to see that old high-church party, whose anger at the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill had not yet been appeased. He was induced to make overtures to some of the chiefs in the Commons, who had been among the most vehement opponents of the Duke of Wellington, and who had drawn conclusions from the subserviency of parliament exceedingly adverse to the present consti-

[1] Lord Brougham himself has described his own emotions, when he beheld the conduct of these his former colleagues, in words which will be long remembered.—See vol. ii. p. 547, of *Lord Brougham's Speeches.*

tution of the House of Commons. Lord Blandford, listening only to his anger and obeying all its suggestions, had proposed a scheme of the widest democracy as a remedy for the present evil. The old Tory party, however, did not assent to his plans, though they entirely agreed in the imputations he cast upon the corrupt subservience of parliament, and cordially shared in all the vehement indignation which that subservience aroused. Lord Grey, however, had no intention of proceeding to the extremities proposed by Lord Blandford, and believed that his own more prudent and temporising plans and arrangements might meet with favour from those who listened with some degree of complacency even to Lord Blandford's so-called extravagancies; and Lord Grey was not deceived. The Duke of Richmond, who had often made himself conspicuous by supporting the principles which distinguished this party, became an active member of the new cabinet. Foremost in the Commons in denouncing the policy of the late administration, and the corrupt obedience of parliament to its commands, was Sir Edward Knatchbull, member for the county of Kent. To him overtures were also made by Lord Grey, and they were favourably received by the indignant county member. The secret history of the negotiations which followed is not very accurately known, and the world has yet to learn upon what point those negotiations failed, but we know that the old Tory party, in the person of Sir Edward Knatchbull, was on the very brink of the precipice, and was only saved by an accident from falling into

the raging gulf of reform politics.[1] In the violent scenes which we are about to witness, we shall indeed find this party, and more particularly Sir Edward himself, absolutely furious in their opposition to the Reform Bill. It is nevertheless true, that this vehement opponent was only accidentally prevented being one of the very administration by whom that measure was submitted to parliament. These various and not very edifying intrigues and their results show how completely the old and formerly compact Tory party was now rent into many pieces. The most numerous but not the most influential section still held together, and acted for a few years under one chief—viz., the Duke of Wellington. All that portion, however, who had looked to Mr. Canning as a leader had thrown aside their most distinctive and most cherished views of policy, and openly and permanently connected themselves with the Whig party, the old and fierce opponents of their former leader. That section which retained the long-known and favourite appellation of Tories, as distinguished from the newly-adopted name of Conservatives, were yet without any leader; they floated in political space, apparently beyond the influence of any one great central power, and were ever and anon ready to rush into another system; to attach themselves permanently to those with whom they had hitherto been at strife, for the purpose of opposing and if possible destroying that influence

[1] The reason assigned for the failure of this negotiation was the certainty of Sir Edward's rejection by the county of Kent, if he accepted office under Lord Grey.

which they had all their lives defended and extolled. Chance frustrated this intention, and we shall soon see this party returning sullenly to the ranks of their old friends, to be again offended—again to start away and to wander about without a chief or even guide, not knowing where to go, where to rest, whom to trust, or what to do.

The new ministry thus suddenly and unexpectedly called into existence, after going through some routine business, proposed to adjourn the Houses of parliament till the 3rd of February of the coming year. Some objection was raised to the length of the recess, but was not insisted on. The remarkable condition of the country and the ministry made the line of policy about to be adopted by the government a subject of most momentous import. Expectation out of doors was high—great distress was said to exist in various parts, and among various classes of the kingdom—great reforms and changes had been promised by the administration, and expected by the people. Among these, reform in parliament still occupied the first place. Time, and care, and patient inquiry were needed to prepare a measure which should equal the hopes of the people, and at the same time escape the danger which lies in the path of every efficient and earnest reformer—viz., that of unnecessarily disturbing and departing from old habits and forms—and thus when no such vital change is required, converting peaceful reform into forcible and dangerous revolution.

END OF VOL. I.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

MR. BROUGHAM'S accession to the Whig cabinet and his influence upon its councils while a member of it, were matters of so much importance, as to make all the circumstances connected both with the one and the other, subjects of interest for the historian of the reforming administration of 1830. I have, however, been unwilling to break the thread of my narrative in the text by a minute discussion of the many extraordinary circumstances connected with Lord Brougham's relations with the Whig party. But in order that those circumstances should be properly appreciated, I shall now gather together all that I know respecting them, appending the story to my general narrative in the form of a separate note, or dissertation.

Mr. Brougham was by birth in no way connected with the aristocratic party of the Whigs; but through his ability, and more especially by his exertions upon the subject of the orders in council opposed to Napoleon's Milan and Berlin decrees, became known to the public. Young and ardent, he, with some others, contributed to establish, and by his writings

to support the *Edinburgh Review*, which at once took the Whig side in politics. This circumstance brought him into intimacy with the Whig leaders. There was always something, however, in the manner and the character and circumstances of Mr. Brougham, which made his connexion with the Whigs anything but a hearty connexion. In the first place, he was not one of them by birth or connexion; he was, moreover, vehement, self-willed, and self-confiding, and was therefore never an obedient partisan. His ability was too great, nevertheless, to permit them to neglect him. Yet after he had taken a very leading part in the House of Commons, he was allowed for some years to remain without a seat in parliament, when in 1812 he was unsuccessful at Liverpool. When he became attorney-general for Queen Caroline, a line of separation, very distinct and marked, was drawn between the Whig party and himself, and his fierce denunciations of George IV. upon the celebrated proceedings on the bill of pains and penalties, made the king his personal enemy, and the Whigs, who were ever looking to office, shy of formally allying themselves with one who had given mortal offence to the dispenser of the good things of the state.

Mr. Brougham, so early as 1805, became known to Lord Grey, and from the first their friendship appears to have been warm and steady; and its continuance, with one single interruption (viz., during Mr. Canning's administration), to the day of Lord Grey's death, is honourable to both of them. Friendships

are seldom so steady between political men. Of the steadiness and warmth of this friendship I have now lying before me unanswerable evidence, in letters written by Lord Grey, extending from the year 1812 to the time of his death. I wished much, for the purpose of doing justice to both statesmen, to insert here textually much of this correspondence. To this, however, Lord Brougham entertained an unconquerable repugnance; so that all I can now do is to attempt, by giving the substance of this evidence, to describe the general impression it has left on my mind. Had I been able to lay before the world the very words in which Lord Grey's feelings of confidence and friendship were expressed, the effect upon others would, I have no doubt, be as vivid as that produced upon myself. Unfortunately, I must be content with general descriptions, in place of the specific phrases which now lie before me.

In 1812 the contest occurred at the Liverpool election between Mr. Brougham and Mr. Canning; and thereupon Lord Grey took occasion, even at that early period, to express his strong desire to cultivate and secure the closest and most confidential connexion both political and personal with Mr. Brougham. He was delighted to believe that Mr. Brougham was likely to be successful; and his pleasure was evidently increased by the fact, that the person to be defeated was Mr. Canning; the opponent made the expectation of triumph doubly gratifying.

Mr. Brougham, however, was defeated; and then,

from the expressions employed by Lord Grey to describe his sorrow upon that event, we learn the importance he attached to Mr. Brougham's influence in the House of Commons. His exclusion from the House he considered an irreparable loss both to his friends and the public, and he declared that nothing ought to be left unattempted to prevent so great an evil.

On the death of Lord Londonderry in 1822, and before the arrangements in the administration consequent on that event were made, speculation was rife; and one of the contingencies contemplated was a negotiation with the Whigs; upon the bare possibility of the government being offered to Lord Grey, he wrote to Mr. Brougham describing his views upon the supposed coming events. He declared that, as regarded measures and principles, there could be no difficulties between himself and Mr. Brougham; and after stating that he still adhered to his former expressed opinions on the subject of Parliamentary reform, he went on to discuss the question of what would be the position and conduct of Mr. Brougham, and he frankly confessed, that upon Mr. Brougham's decision the fate of any Whig government must depend. Who was to lead in the House of Commons was a most important point; and upon this subject Lord Grey declared, in language as strong as could be employed, that the lead in that House must be openly taken by Mr. Brougham; that in order to be able to take this lead really and effectively, it was necessary for Mr. Brougham to form part of the government.

'In office,' he said in effect, 'you must be, or the government, I am persuaded, could not go on.' Mr. Brougham at that time was accustomed to express great reluctance to pursue any course that would take him from his profession. With this feeling Lord Grey sympathized; but he plainly said, that he could not imagine it possible for anything to prevail on him (Lord Grey) to take office, unless Mr. Brougham joined him and led the House of Commons.

Though such were Lord Grey's feelings in 1822, and though he continued to entertain them both as respects Mr. Brougham and reform, the Whigs generally appear to have entertained very different notions. They were not acquiescent in the notion that Mr. Brougham ought to be their leader—in short, that without his aid no government could be formed—or that reform was to be the great business of their administration. In 1823, I find Lord Althorp stating that there was what he called a *republican* form of government for the opposition. This he said he thought a bad plan, though, if acquiesced in by Mr. Brougham, he (Lord Althorp) would not object.

Lord Grey and Lord Althorp were old and attached friends of Mr. Brougham—the younger men of their party, however, looked upon him with jealousy, not unmixed with fear and dislike. Lord Althorp's opinion of his friend's power and proper position coincided with that of Lord Grey; he stated, in fact, that for the post of leader Mr. Brougham was alone competent, and he found it difficult to use words sufficiently strong to

express the pleasure he felt upon hearing that Mr. Brougham had consented to act as the leader of the opposition at that time. But though Lord Althorp was anxious to put Mr. Brougham forward, upon important occasions, as the leader of the party, he was eventually overruled, and himself constituted chief. In 1827, when the Liverpool administration broke up, and an administration was supposed about to be formed, with Lord Bathurst as King Log at the head of it—Lord Althorp stated to Mr. Brougham that he had not yet consulted with anybody upon it, but that his own opinion was, that immediately after the holidays Mr. Brougham ought to move an address praying the king to form an administration united in principle, stating, in making the motion, the principles upon which the Whigs had been acting for some years past, and saying that they would continue to look at measures and not men, but that they felt that the country could not be well governed upon an absurd system of compromise,[1] and that things were coming to such a crisis that they felt it their duty, whatever might be their opinion of individual measures, to call the attention of the country to the situation in which the interests of the empire were placed.

The office here proposed to be imposed on Mr.

[1] This statement is curious and instructive, when considered with reference to the conduct of the same persons in their junction with Mr. Canning. A more 'absurd system of compromise' was never known, and so thought Lord Grey of the Whig coalition with Mr. Canning.

Brougham was clearly that of leader of the party. Lord Althorp was not only willing but eager to place the burthen and confer the honour on any one in preference to himself, and Mr. Brougham he evidently considered the only fit person for the task. But the Whig party consists of many, and the persons opposed to the leadership of Mr. Brougham were sufficiently united and powerful to give effect to their opposition.

During the administration of Lord Liverpool, the opposition formally chose Mr. Tierney for their leader in the House of Commons. From this office, however, Mr. Tierney quickly retired, and for many sessions no acknowledged leader existed. In debate Mr. Brougham always took the lead, and during the period of Mr. Canning's leadership in the House of Commons on the part of the ministry, after the death of Lord Londonderry, the real opposition chief, so far as debating was concerned, was certainly Mr. Brougham; but the Whigs always carefully showed that he was not the formal leader of their councils as a party. When Mr. Canning became minister, and was deserted by his friends, Mr. Brougham, through his energy and incessant activity, became a prominent instrument in the formation of the alliance which took place between Mr. Canning and the Whigs. Mr. Brougham, however, took no office under Mr. Canning, and refused, as I have already related, the office of Chief Baron, which Mr. Canning offered him. At this time, and in consequence of his large share in promoting this alliance, a coolness occurred between Lord Grey and Mr.

Brougham—between Mr. Brougham and Lord Howick the difference was too great to be accurately described by the moderate term coolness.

There was however in the transactions of that time something very significant of the feelings of his Whig associates towards him. No situation was offered him compatible with a seat in the House of Commons. His leader on the circuit, Mr. Scarlett, was made Attorney-General. Mr. Tierney, the ostensible leader of the Whig party in parliament, became a member of Mr. Canning's administration, and the only step taken to provide for Mr. Brougham was a step to take him from the House of Commons. There was at the time a reason stated for Mr. Brougham's exclusion—viz., the king's personal dislike. But this would have prevented the offer of a judgeship, which they who allege the king's antipathy as a reason for his (Mr. Brougham's) exclusion assert, was really offered him by Mr. Canning.

Both Lord Grey and Lord Althorp had misgivings as to the junction with Mr. Canning. Those of Lord Grey were not conquered, or reasoned away, and he went into violent opposition to Mr. Canning's administration. Lord Althorp would seem eventually to have acquiesced in Mr. Brougham's views on this matter.

The expression of Lord Althorp's opinion, however, was not less marked than that of Lord Grey, and our only wonder is, how such difficulties of principle were in his case eventually overcome, so far

as to allow him to give any species of support to Mr. Canning.

We have seen, nevertheless, that his friends did accept office under Mr. Canning, and that Mr. Canning openly declared that he was opposed both to parliamentary reform and the Test Act, and that his ministry was not formed on the principles of civil and religious liberty, even to the extent of being pledged as a ministry to catholic emancipation.

The Whigs who had joined Mr. Canning afterwards formed, in conjunction with Lord Goderich, an administration which we have seen soon came to a ludicrous termination. So soon as George IV. had ignominiously ejected, and Mr. Huskisson and his friends had unhandsomely deserted them, they again became a united party in opposition. The difference between Lord Grey and Mr. Brougham was healed, and old feelings of friendship, and even of affection, were revived—if, indeed, they had ever really been diminished.

Lord Althorp, however, now seems to have become ostensibly the leader of the party in the House of Commons, though constantly taking counsel with Mr. Brougham, and necessarily throwing on his shoulders the real burthen of debate.

At length the general election, consequent on the death of George IV., took place, and the Whigs and the Whig leader had to frame a programme of their intended operations during the coming campaign. We should remember that the world was in commo-

tion—thrones had been shattered—many seemed just tottering to their fall—and great changes, in fact a revolution, were about to occur in England. On the eve of such great events, the following is the plan of operations proposed by Lord Althorp. It justifies every statement I have made, as to the absence of everything that deserved the name of a plan; and because it does so, I will, in this instance, give the words used upon the occasion:—

'I shall be in town on the 26th (October), where I conclude I shall find you; we can then discuss the course which ought to be taken. I am inclined to ground our opposition to the government *mainly if not entirely* on their total inefficiency.[1] I think the greatest danger which we run, and the thing most to be avoided, is the giving people an opportunity of saying that we were very moderate and mealy-mouthed as long as there was a chance of the Duke of Wellington taking us in, but that now we despair of this we are become violent. We who know the accusation not to be true will not be believed, and it is of importance, therefore, if possible, so to conduct our mode of procedure as not to give a colour to it. I think with this view we ought to be cautious how

[1] In September, Lord Althorp had written thus—'If the report be true that Huskisson and Co. are coming in, we shall have to take a new departure at the beginning of the session; for one cannot then say that the ministry is inefficient. I do not, however, believe the report.'—(September 5, 1830.) Mr. Huskisson's death shortly after relieved the party from this cause of alarm.

we urge anything against the ministers which might have been equally well brought forward last session. I should also be for giving them more credit for the quickness with which they acceded to the wishes of the people in acknowledging Louis Philip. I think they deserve credit also, it being better to do a thing late than never, for having at last removed Lord O'Neil from the office of Postmaster-General. With respect to the regency question, I conclude the Duke will propose the queen as regent, either with or without a council. I should prefer the Duchess of Kent, but they are both very well fitted for the office, and provided they are not either of them to be saddled with a council, I should not be inclined to run into the trap which in this case will be set, and to give him the popularity with the queen, which his fighting the battle of the queen against the Duchess of Kent would undoubtedly give him. These are my present views, but I shall be glad to talk them over with you, and to hear what you think about them, being by no means wedded to my own opinion.—(Oct. 5, 1830.)

Considering the actual position of all political affairs, and the events which immediately followed, a more narrow view of things can hardly be conceived.

Mr. Brougham was now member for Yorkshire; and these are the terms of gratulation employed by Lord Althorp on the occasion of that great triumph:—

'If I have not written to you before, it is not from my feeling less pleasure in your triumph than any other of your friends. It is the highest honour and the greatest reward that ever was bestowed upon a public man, and the greatest that can be; and what is more, it is well deserved.'—(August 26, 1830.)

The extraordinary activity of Mr. Brougham in parliament and out of doors now made him the most popular and powerful of all the liberal politicians. He became the great promoter of education—the leader of the anti-slavery movement—one of the chief parliamentary organs of the various dissenting bodies—and at length, when member for Yorkshire, he became the head of the parliamentary reform party. Just when he had arrived at this great height of popularity, the administration of the Duke of Wellington was overthrown, and the Whig leader, Lord Grey, was ordered to frame an administration. And now accurate statements as to dates become of great importance

The 15th of November of the year 1830 was on Monday. On the morning of the 16th the Duke of Wellington resigned; and there is a belief that the Duke gave the king two pieces of advice—first, to send for Lord Grey, and second, to consent to a measure of moderate reform. Rumour has added one other item, as having been added by the Duke by way of warning to his Majesty, and that was, not to consent to Mr. Brougham's being made Master of the Rolls; because at that time he deemed Mr. Brougham

the most dangerous person in parliament, and thought that his powers for mischief would be indefinitely increased if he were made entirely independent, as he would have been if Master of the Rolls, and allowed to hold, as he then would, a seat in the House of Commons. For my own part, I do not believe that any such advice was given by the Duke of Wellington.

Lord Grey was sent for by the king on the afternoon of the 16th, and on that day Lord Grey saw the king.

During this interview with the king, Lord Grey explained the principles on which his administration would be founded and would act: respecting them Lord Grey experienced no difficulty with his Majesty, But on mentioning, among the persons to be connected with his administration, the name of Mr. Brougham, a difficulty—a real difficulty arose. The important question now arises, what was the nature of this difficulty?

There is some reason to believe, that the difficulty did *not* relate to the situation of Attorney-General; but this reason is not conclusive. That it *may* have related to the situation of Master of the Rolls is possible, though not probable.

On the 16th, Mr. Brougham had been offered the situation of Attorney, and had peremptorily refused it. Of this Lord Grey was aware on the 16th, but whether he knew of the refusal before he mentioned the name of Mr. Brougham to the king is not clear. If he *did* know it, he would not speak to the king of

Mr. Brougham as the intended Attorney-General; but, having ascertained Mr. Brougham's resolution on that point, he might have mentioned his name in connexion with the office of Master of the Rolls.[1] That he did do so, and that he received from the king a positive refusal to grant it, Lord Grey asserted, and gave the king's refusal as a reason to Mr. Brougham for not appointing him to that office, which it was well known he anxiously desired.

But there is another explanation, which certainly does not altogether redound to the credit of Lord Grey, as a plain-dealing, honest man, but which, nevertheless, has been asserted—and not by mean authority,—and the explanation is as follows:—

It has been said that the notion of Mr. Brougham's being Master of the Rolls never entered the head of anybody except that of Mr. Brougham, and that either Lord Grey never gave the reason supposed to have been assigned to Mr. Brougham by him, or that, if he did so, it was a device to escape from a difficulty. That Lord Grey had resolved not to allow Mr. Brougham to remain in the House of Commons, and, at the same time be connected with the government, and that he therefore had, at the outset, resolved to leave him out of the government entirely, or to force

[1] Sir J. Leach was at this time Master of the Rolls, but was ready, it was said, to take a peerage, and be Chancellor of Ireland, thus making a vacancy, and enabling Lord Grey to appoint Mr. Brougham to the office.

him into the Lords by making him Chancellor, Lord Grey being supposed unable to trust Mr. Brougham in the Commons, but not being afraid of *Lord* Brougham in the House of Peers.

My own opinion on all the facts that I have been able to ascertain, does not agree with either of the above explanations, but is as follows:—Mr. Brougham desired the Rolls—the Whigs were resolved that he should not have that office. Of these two assertions, the first I believe on direct testimony; the second is a matter of inference. That the situation of Attorney-General was offered and refused on the 16th, is proved also by direct testimony — viz., that of Lord Grey himself; and I therefore do not believe the statement which attributes to Lord Grey a determination to remove Mr. Brougham from the House of Commons if he became in any way connected with the government. And after the statements above quoted, more especially that in which Lord Grey proposes that in case he makes a government, Mr. Brougham should lead the House of Commons, and in which he states that he cannot conceive his attempting to form a government possible unless Mr. Brougham was to form part of it—such a determination on the part of Lord Grey seems utterly incredible. That the king spontaneously resolved to refuse Mr. Brougham the office of Master of the Rolls is highly improbable. —Mr. Brougham's friends knew that he was anxious

to have it,—but there is no evidence that his political opponents were aware of his wishes on that head. It would seem more probable, therefore, that if the king were prompted on the occasion, that the prompting was by the Whigs, than that it came from the Duke of Wellington or Mr. Peel.

When Mr. Brougham, on the evening of the 16th, consented to postpone his motion respecting reform, he had been offered the situation of Attorney-General, and gave evident symptoms of having felt himself offended by the offer.[1]

So soon as Lord Grey was sent for by the king, he instantly sent to Mr. Brougham notice of the circumstance, and on that day the offer of the post of Attorney-General was made and refused. From that time to Thursday evening he heard nothing from Lord Grey or the administration, which, by that time, was so far framed as to meet in council. The first cabinet council was held by the new administration on Thursday, the 18th of November, at Lansdowne House. At that council Lord Grey announced that he had the king's consent to offer Mr. Brougham the great seal, subject to the concurrence of the cabinet, and the cabinet thereupon unanimously resolved to make the offer. That night Lord Grey wrote to Mr. Brougham, simply requesting to see him as early as he could the next morning—viz., on Friday. Mr. Brougham did

[1] The observation at the time was, that he was 'sulky.'

see him that morning on his way to Westminster, and *refused* the seal, giving as his reason the great uncertainty of the continuance of the ministry, and the great sacrifice, therefore, which acceptance would entail on him. Lord Grey said, 'Do not give a positive answer till you have seen Althorp.' Lord Althorp and Lord Sefton afterwards, and during the same morning, saw Mr. Brougham at the House of Lords, and pressed him with the argument stated in the text; and then, but not till then, Mr. Brougham acceded to their wishes.

That evening—viz., on Friday, the 19th, he presented certain petitions, left, and never again entered the House of Commons.

There is much in all these transactions to excite surprise in any one who knows the footing upon which Mr. Brougham had always been with Lord Grey and Lord Althorp. That the man who had won the battle was to be passed over in the division of the spoil—that the post for which he was deemed most fitting eight years before should no longer be offered him, viz., leader of the House of Commons—that he was to be kept out of the Cabinet, and to be contented with the comparatively subordinate position of Attorney-General, does indeed seem strange, and plainly proves that some powerful influence was at work against him, which was sufficient to counteract the wishes both of Lord Grey, the premier, and Lord Althorp, the leader of the House of Commons and

Chancellor of the Exchequer. A wary man would have hesitated, under such circumstances, to put himself in the power of those who could thus act, and Lord Brougham in after years discovered that he had trusted too much to the honour and generosity of those for whose interest he withdrew from the House of Commons, and ceased at once and for ever to be the great popular chief.

00027349

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 April, 2016